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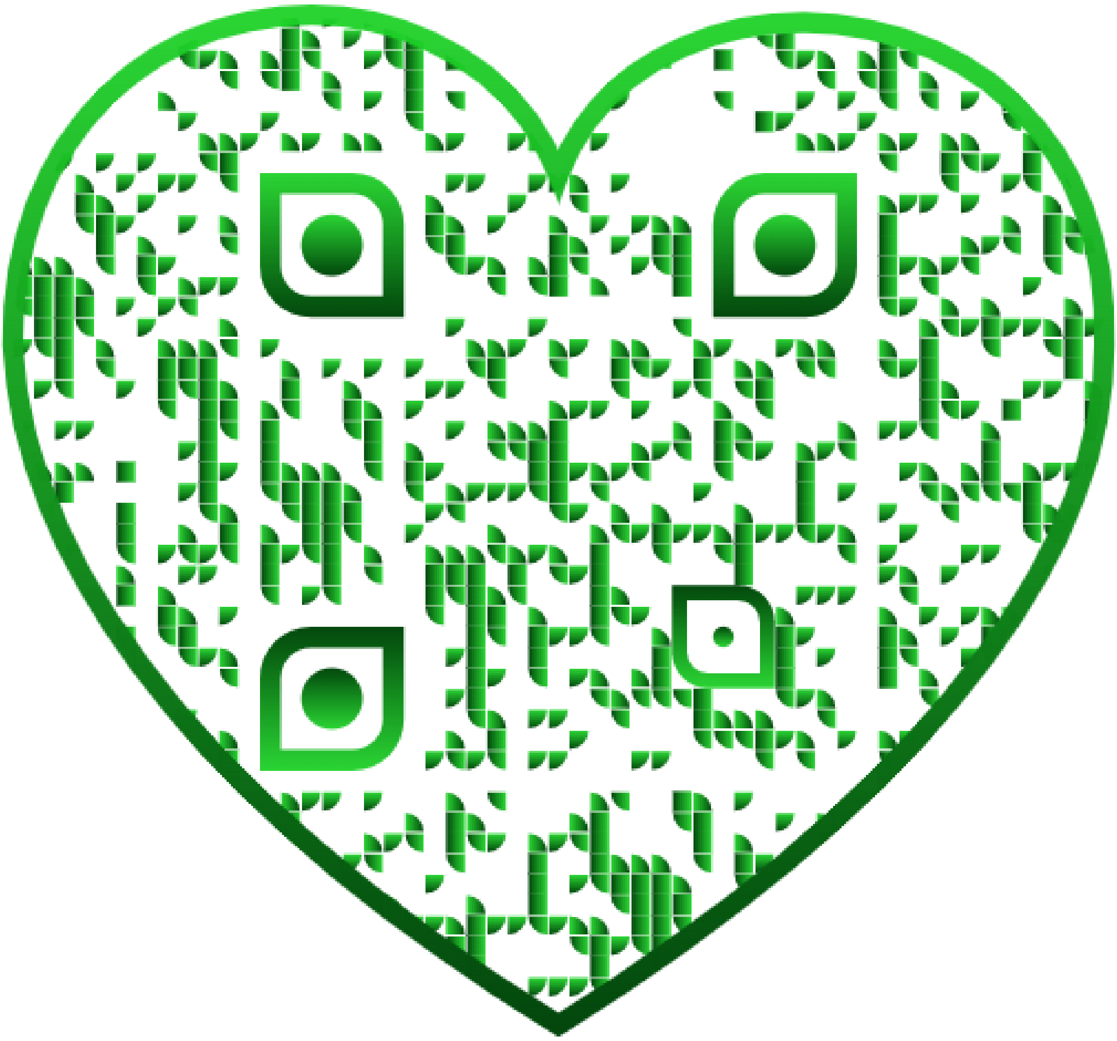

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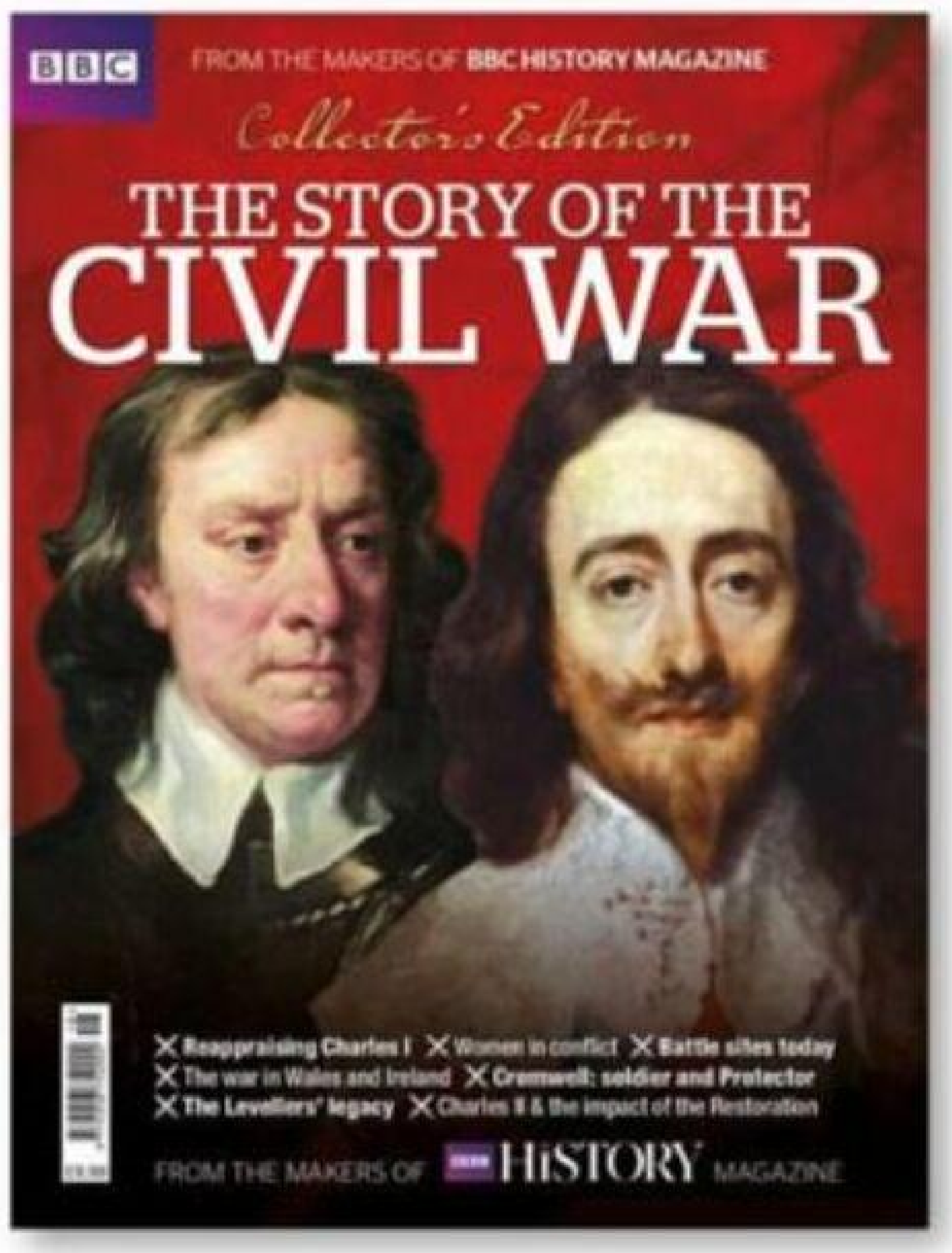
The bloody conflict that tore Britain apart in the mid-17th century pitted a vain, headstrong king, unshakeably convinced of his 'divine right' to rule, against a rebellious parliament determined to reform the monarchy. The fighting was constrained to England. It was a case of nobles versus commoners, extravagantly coiffed Cavaliers battling austerely clad Roundheads.

This is a view of the Civil War that many people still believe. In reality, the conflict was far from just an English affair, and its origins were much more complex than that trite precis suggests. To tackle popular misconceptions about the conflict, for this special edition of *BBC History Magazine* we've recruited a battalion of historians to discuss its context, causes, actions and aftermath.

We examine the personalities of the key figures, delving into the psyches of **King Charles I** and **Oliver Cromwell**, and meeting **leading Levellers** and **royalist spies**. We listen in on **the machinations of rebel lords** who conspired towards a Scottish invasion of England, and examine how the still-novel print media was used to spread lurid propaganda about **royalists' supernatural servants**. We also explore the **lives of ordinary folk** during the war, with a special focus on its impact on **women,** in **Ireland** and in **Wales**. And we examine the motives and fates of the **men who signed Charles I's death warrant**, follow the **flight of Charles II** after his early setbacks, and discover the impact of the **Restoration of the monarchy** in 1660.

The Story of the Civil War compiles and updates articles that have appeared previously in *BBC History Magazine,* along with several new articles written specially for this edition. I hope you enjoy it.

Charlotte Hodgman
Managing editor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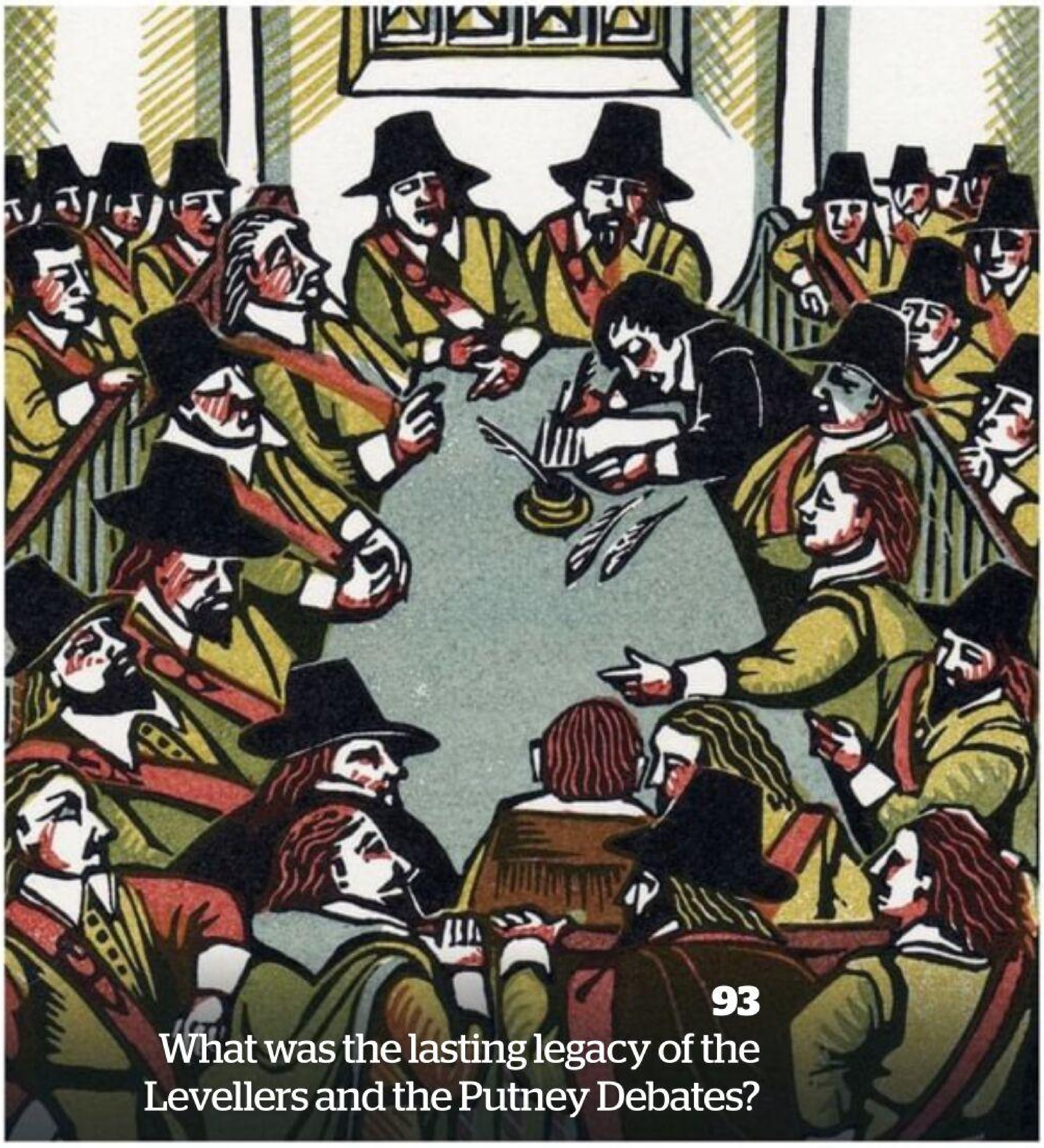
> "The idea at the heart of it all was that **all men have a life to live**, a stake in government; not even the mightiest monarch could make it go away"

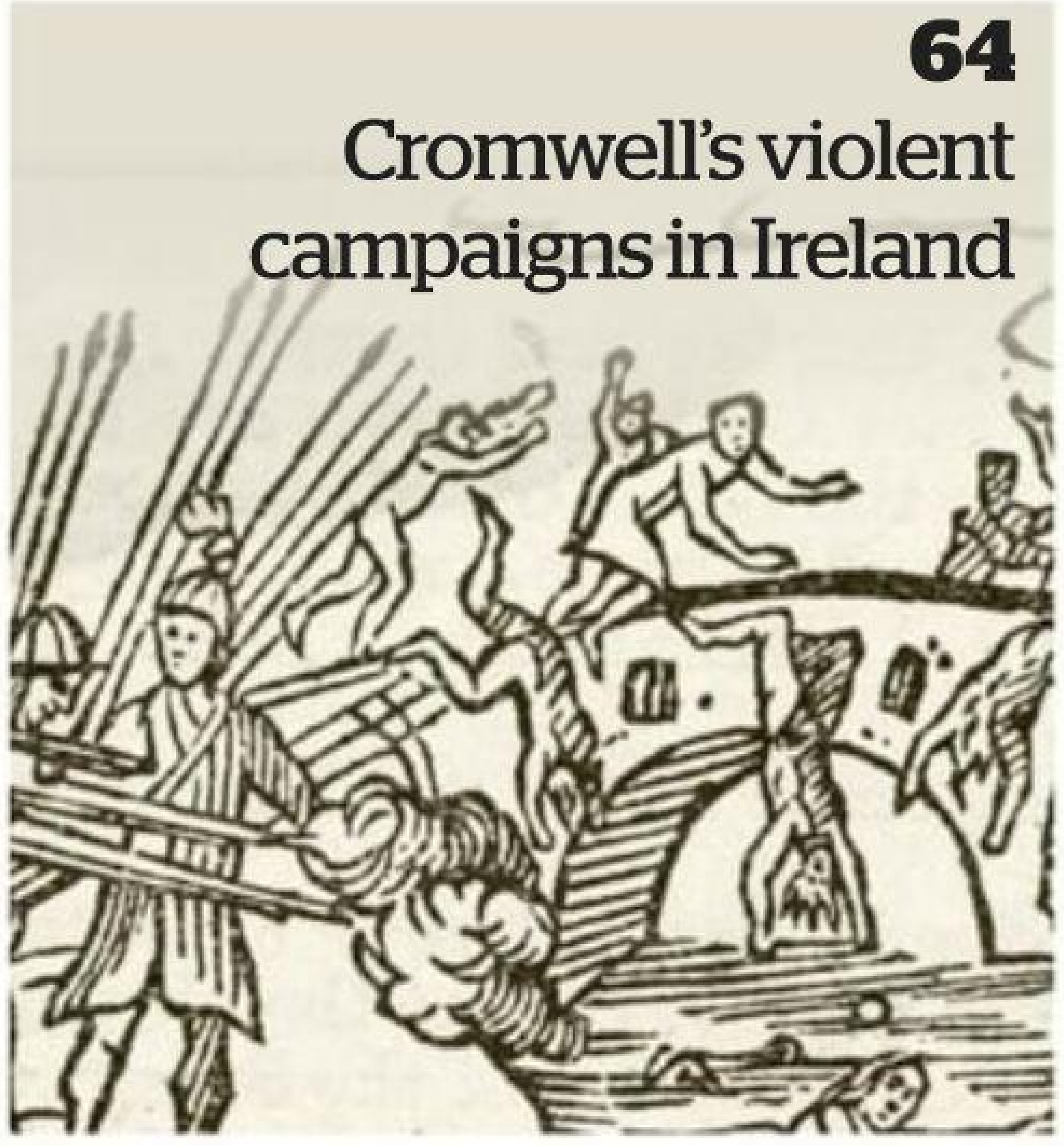
Historian and writer DIANE PURKISS discusses how the roots of modern democracy emerged from the turmoil of the Civil War on page 114

BRIDGEMAN/ALAMY/DREAMSTIME/JENI NOTT

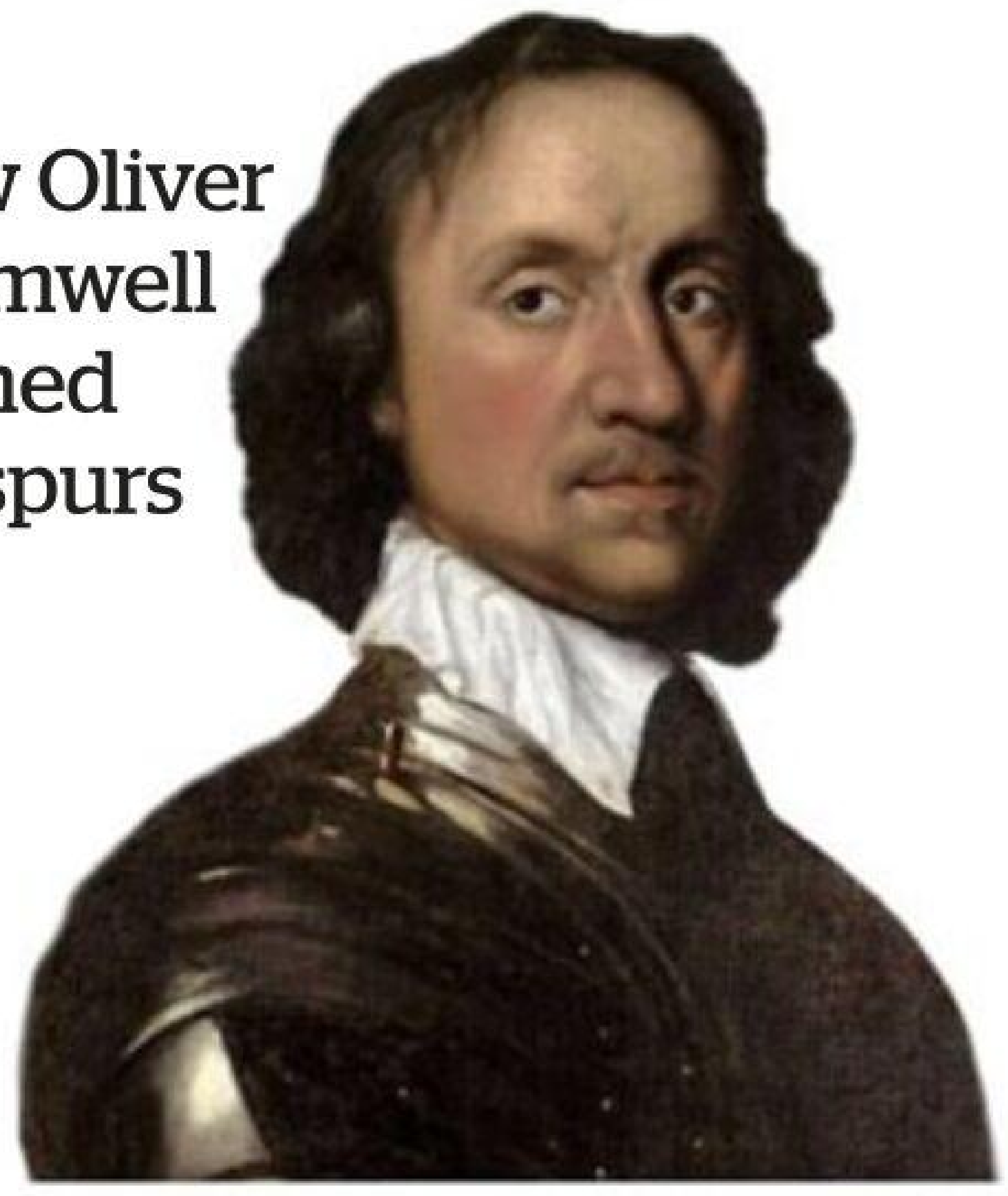
CONTENTS



93
What was the lasting legacy of the Levellers and the Putney Debates?



64
Cromwell's violent campaigns in Ireland



30
How Oliver Cromwell earned his spurs

6 **Timeline**
Key moments in the history of the Civil War

12 THE PATH TO WAR

14 **Rising of the rebel lords**
John Adamson examines the role of republican-leaning nobles in the start of the conflict

24 **Charles I: neither martyr nor traitor**
Leanda de Lisle explains why the ill-fated king is misrepresented and widely misunderstood

30 **The making of a military genius**
Martyn Bennett explores the soldiering CV of future lord protector Oliver Cromwell

36 **Key clashes**
John Morrill visits eight battle sites across Britain and Ireland

40 **Charles I's secret agent**
Smuggler, lobbyist, go-between: John Fox reveals the talents of royalist agent Jane Whorwood

43 **The great misconceptions of the Civil War**
Ten experts explode common myths surrounding the conflict

50 LIVING THROUGH CONFLICT

52 **Wales: this last refuge of monarchy**
Lloyd Bowen reveals the important part the largely royalist principality played in the war

58 **The home front**
Anne Laurence explores the various challenges faced by women of all classes

64 **The Irish question**
Cromwell's Irish campaigns were both successful and problematic, says Martyn Bennett

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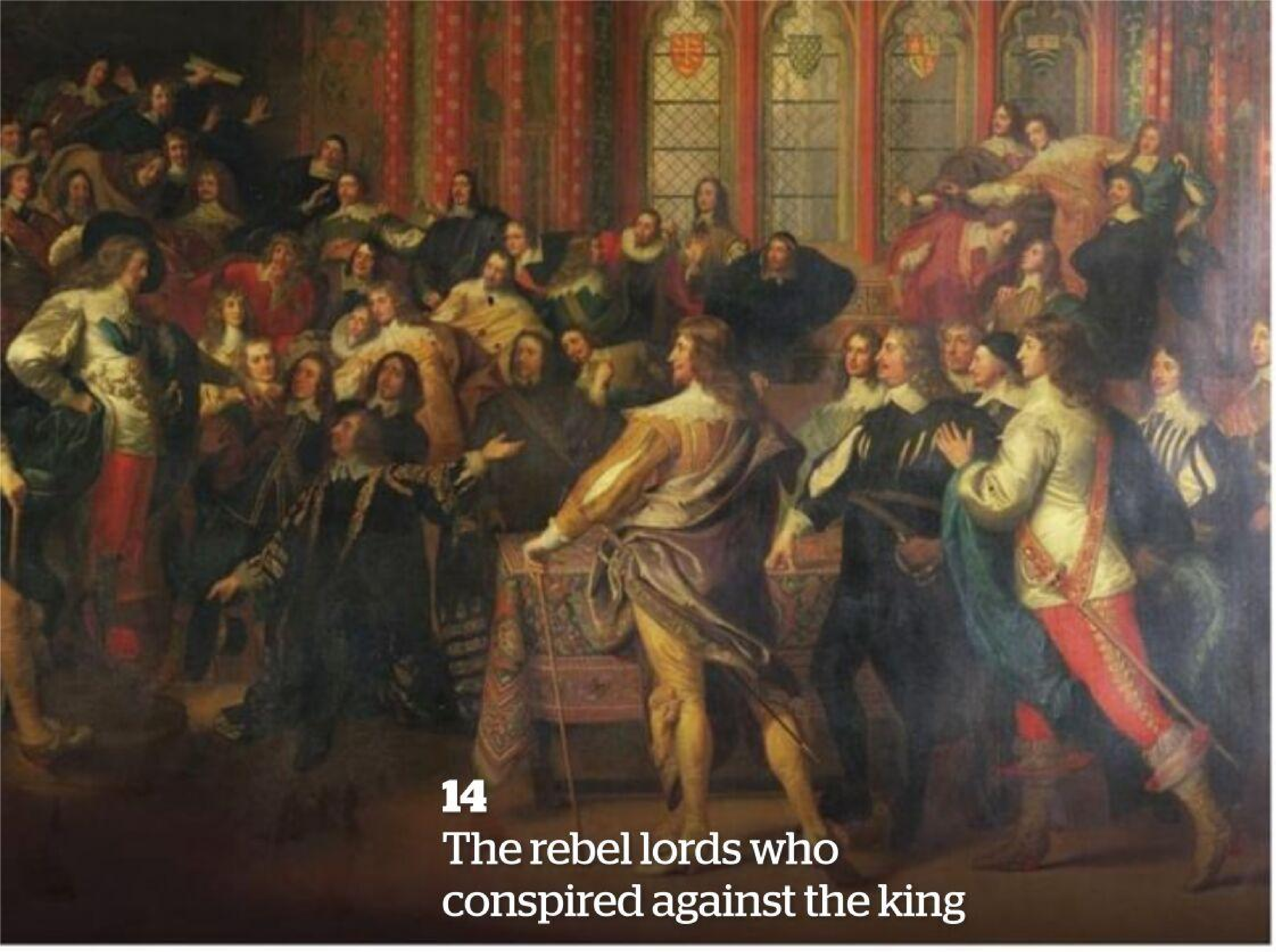
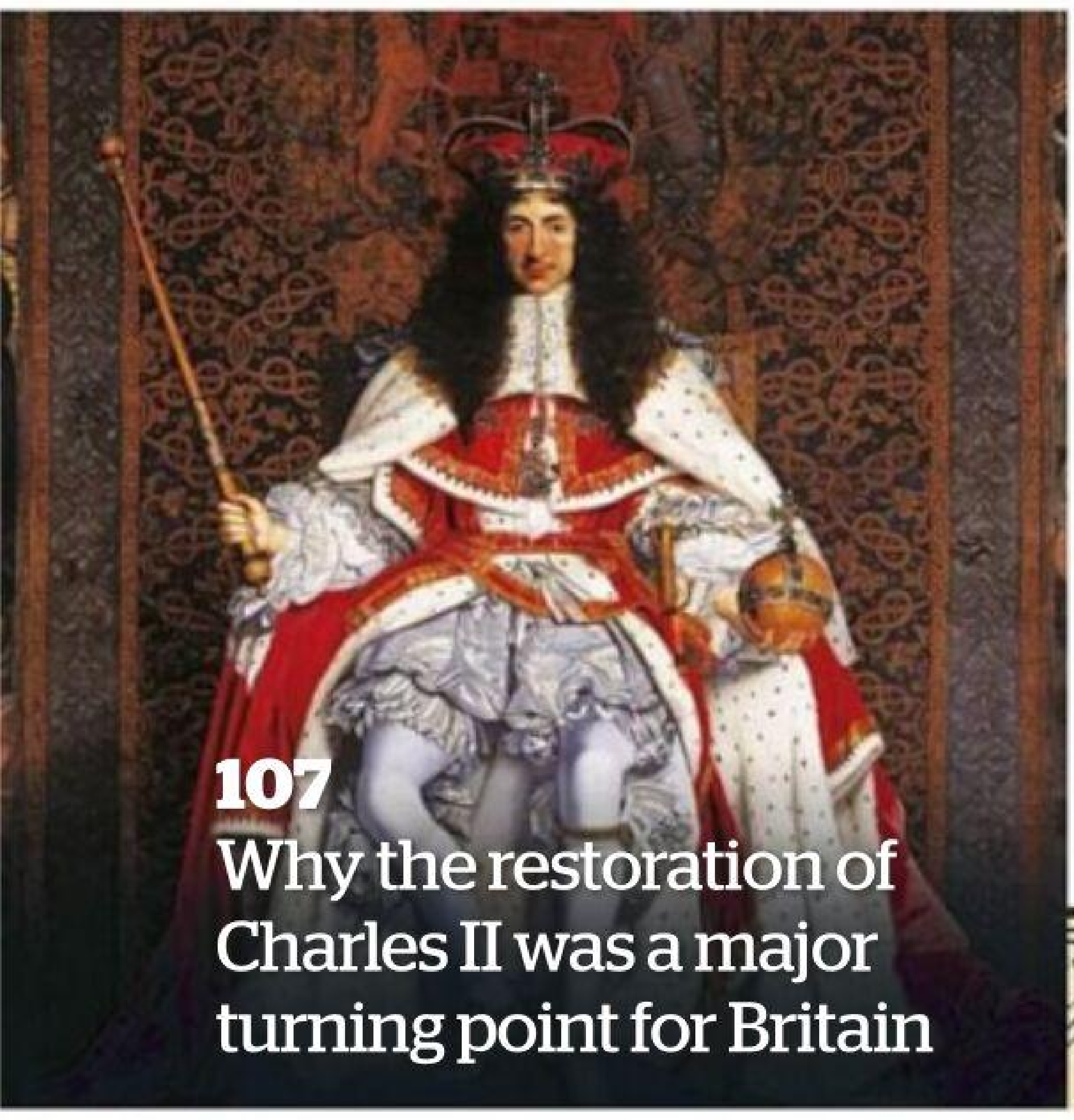


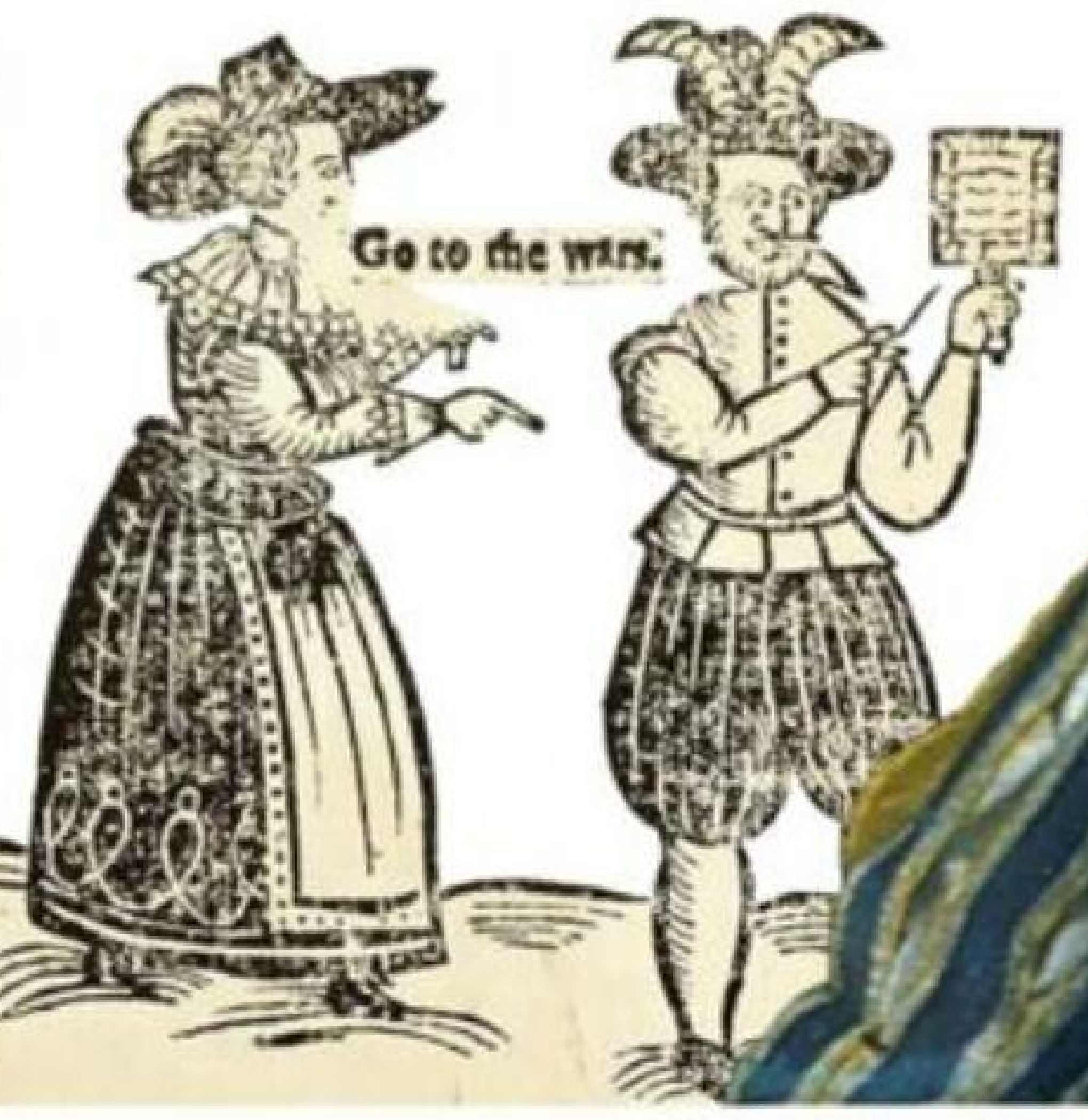
14
The rebel lords who conspired against the king

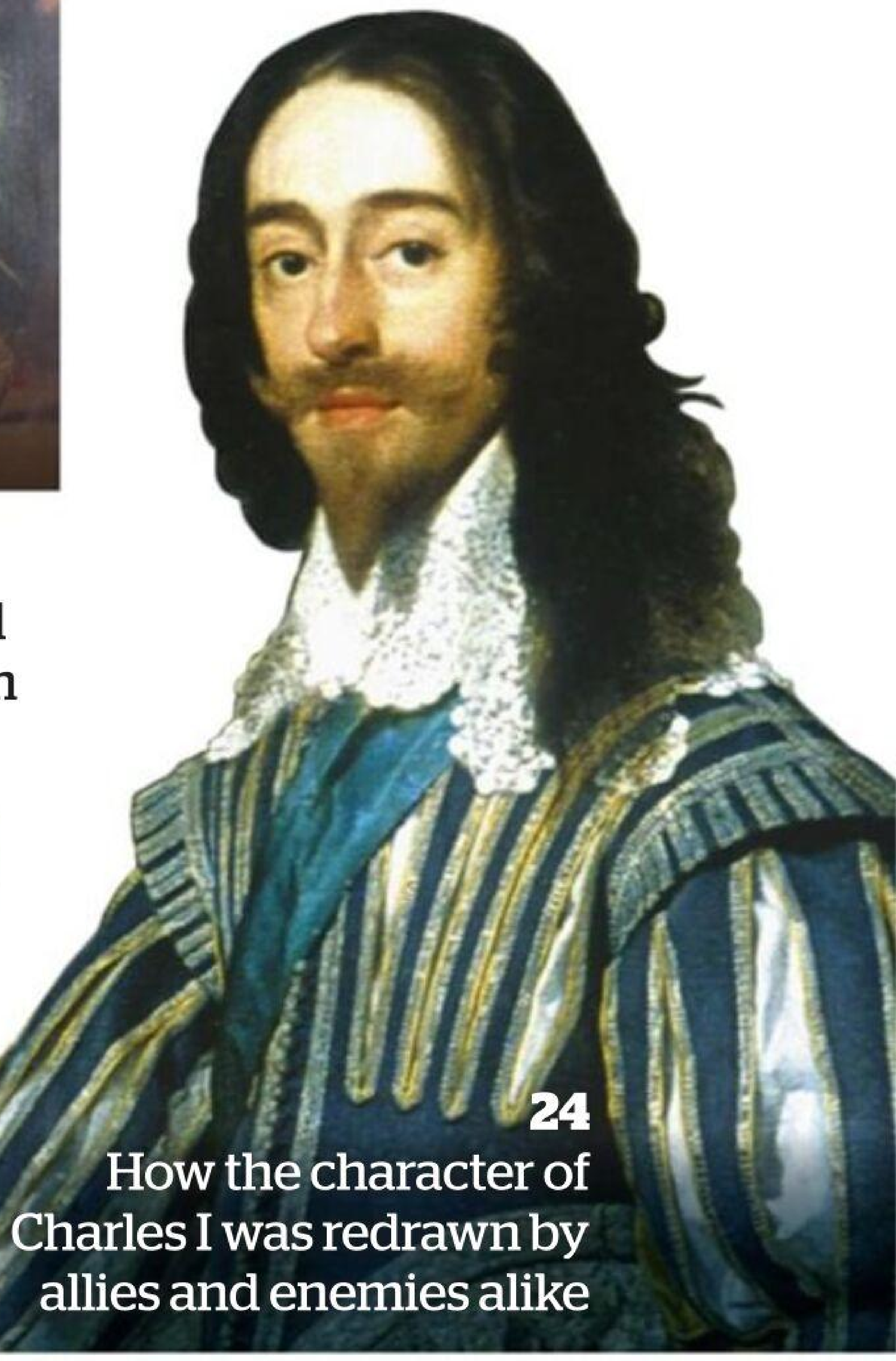
43
Explore the social and economic impacts of war



107
Why the restoration of Charles II was a major turning point for Britain

58
The women who battled armies and financial ruin


Go to the wars.



24
How the character of Charles I was redrawn by allies and enemies alike

70 The prince and the devil dog
Mark Stoyle reveals how one royalist's 'demon poodle' became fodder for propaganda-mongers

75 Life in wartime
How did the war impact on civilians? Mark Stoyle introduces ordinary folk affected by the fighting

82 **LEGACY AND AFTERMATH**

84 Flight of Charles II
Charles Spencer visits Boscobel House and traces the travels and travails of the Stuart heir

88 The celebrity radical
Mike Braddick profiles John Lilburne, one of the most influential pamphleteers of the Civil War era

93 The Levellers' legacy
Ted Vallance challenges some big claims made about the Putney Debates' impact on radical politics around the world

96 Putting the Protector back into the Protectorate
Was Cromwell really little more than a figurehead for the Roundheads? Patrick Little refreshes our understanding of the lord protector

104 Killers of the king
Charles Spencer looks at the actions and fates of the regicides – the men who signed the death warrant of Charles I

107 1660: the year that changed everything
Ian Mortimer explains why the Restoration was the most pivotal point in British history since 1066

113 The Civil War in words
John Morrill selects eight must-read books about the conflict

114 Opinion
Diane Purkiss shares her thoughts on the impact of the Civil War

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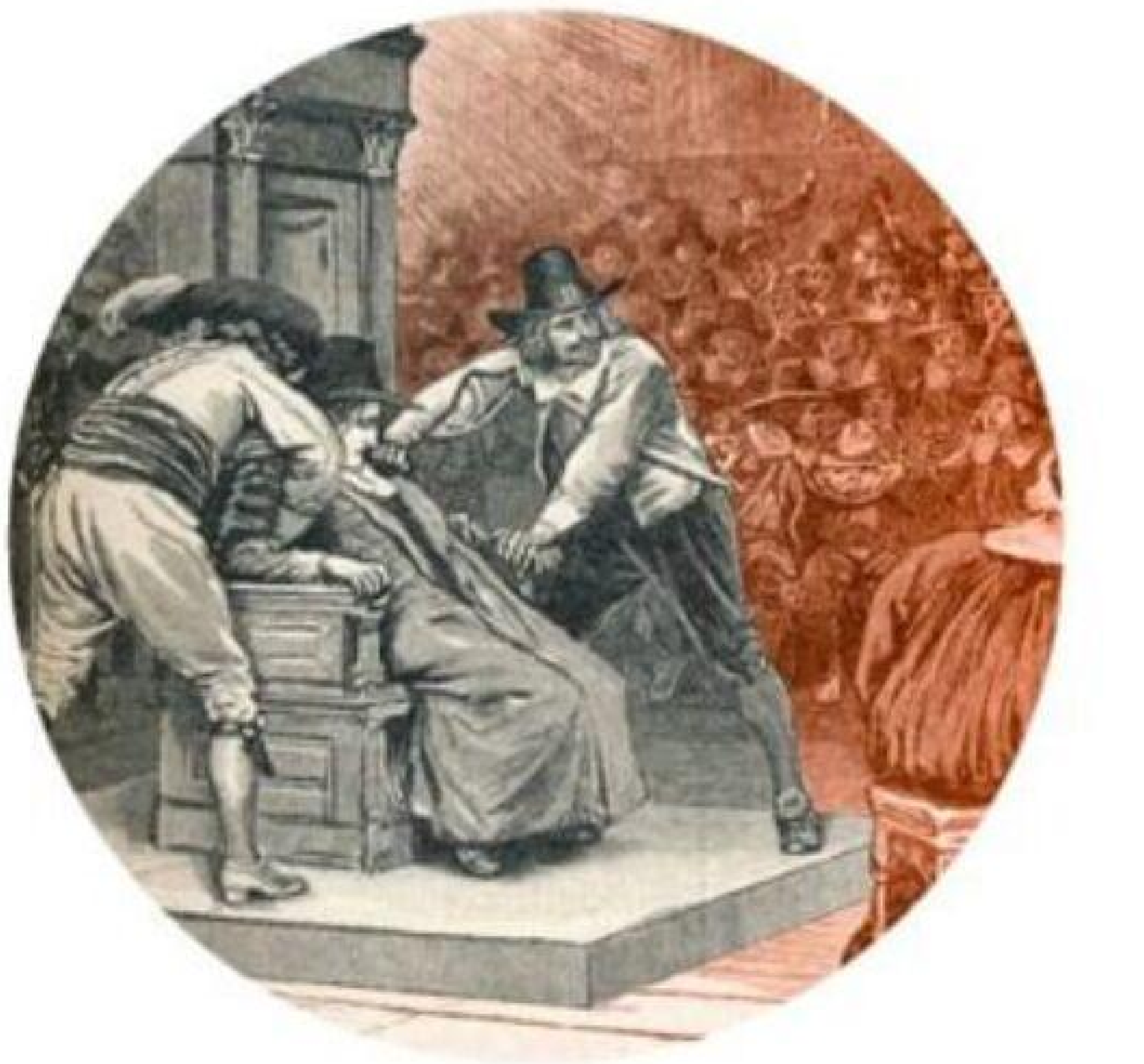
Civil War: context, conflict and resolution

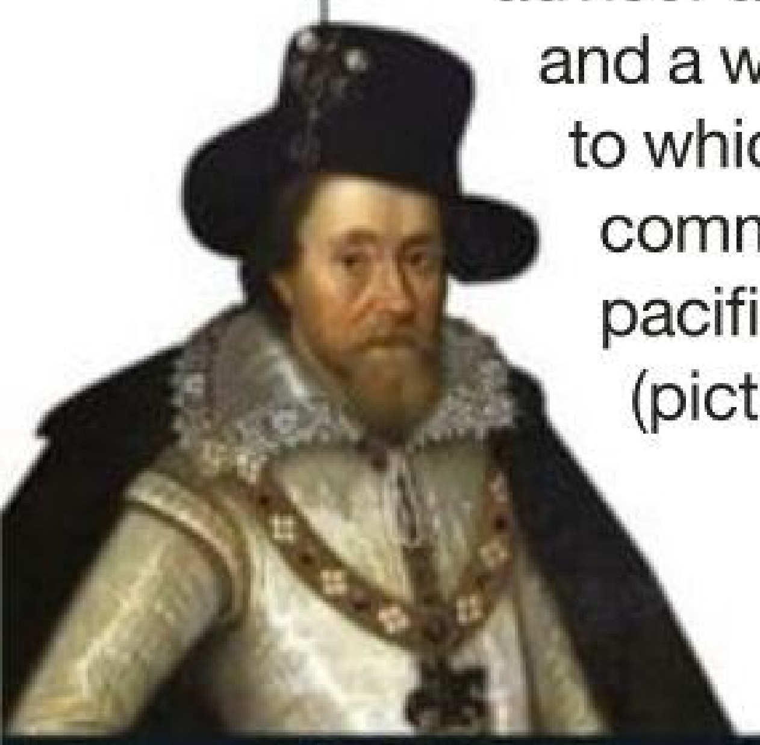
Ann Hughes traces the key moments in the lead-up to, progress and aftermath of the long sequence of hostilities

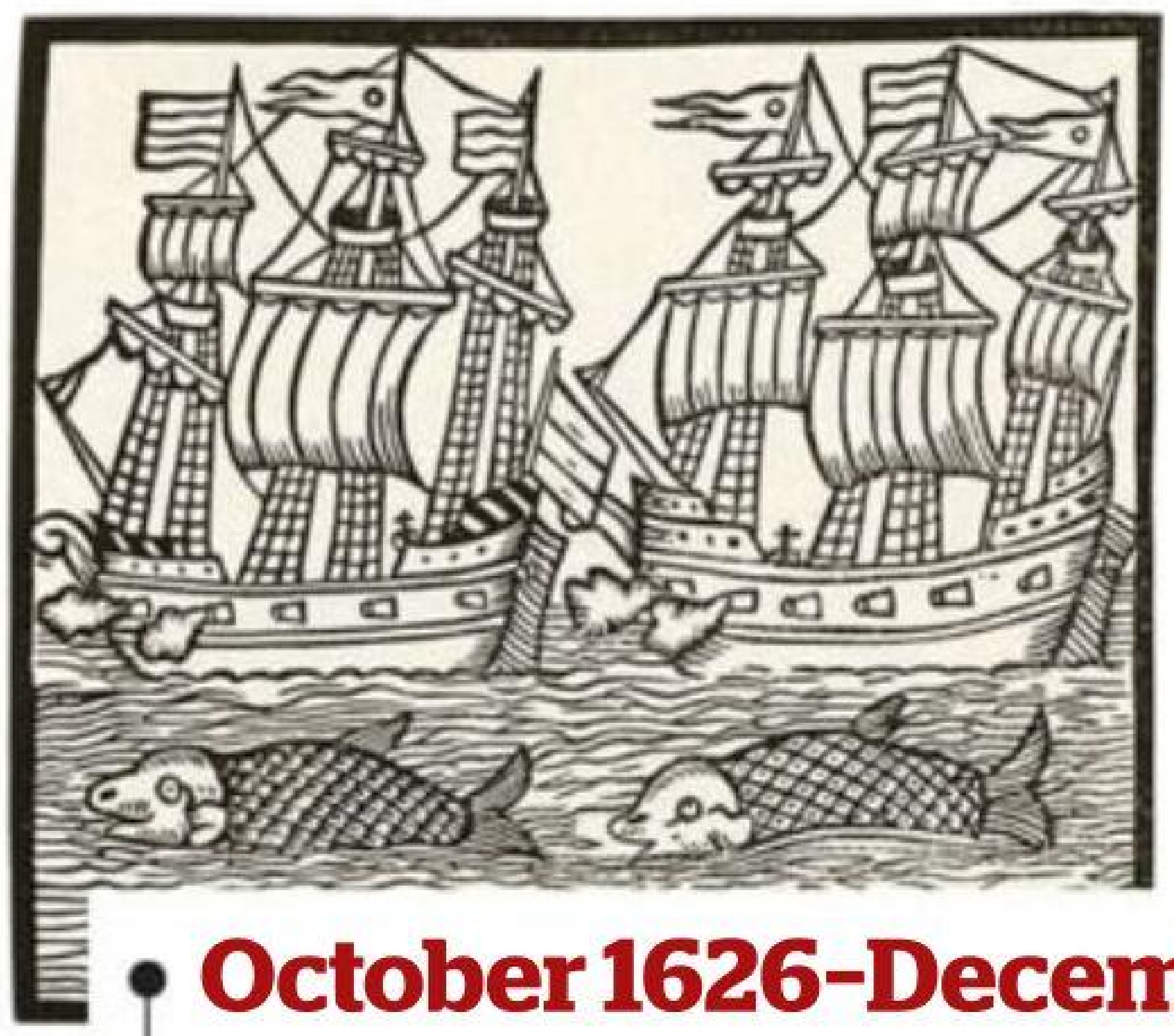


The Speaker of the House of Commons is coerced as MPs read various charges against Charles's actions

27 March 1625

King James VI and I dies, and his son Charles I becomes king, aged 24, having been heir to the throne since the death of Prince Henry in 1612. Charles inherits the Duke of Buckingham, his father's favourite, as his closest advisor and confidante, and a war with Spain, to which he is more committed than his pacific father (pictured left).





Ships of the Duke of Buckingham's fleet set out for France in 1627. Charles I levied taxes to fund war with France, causing conflict with parliament

October 1626–December 1627

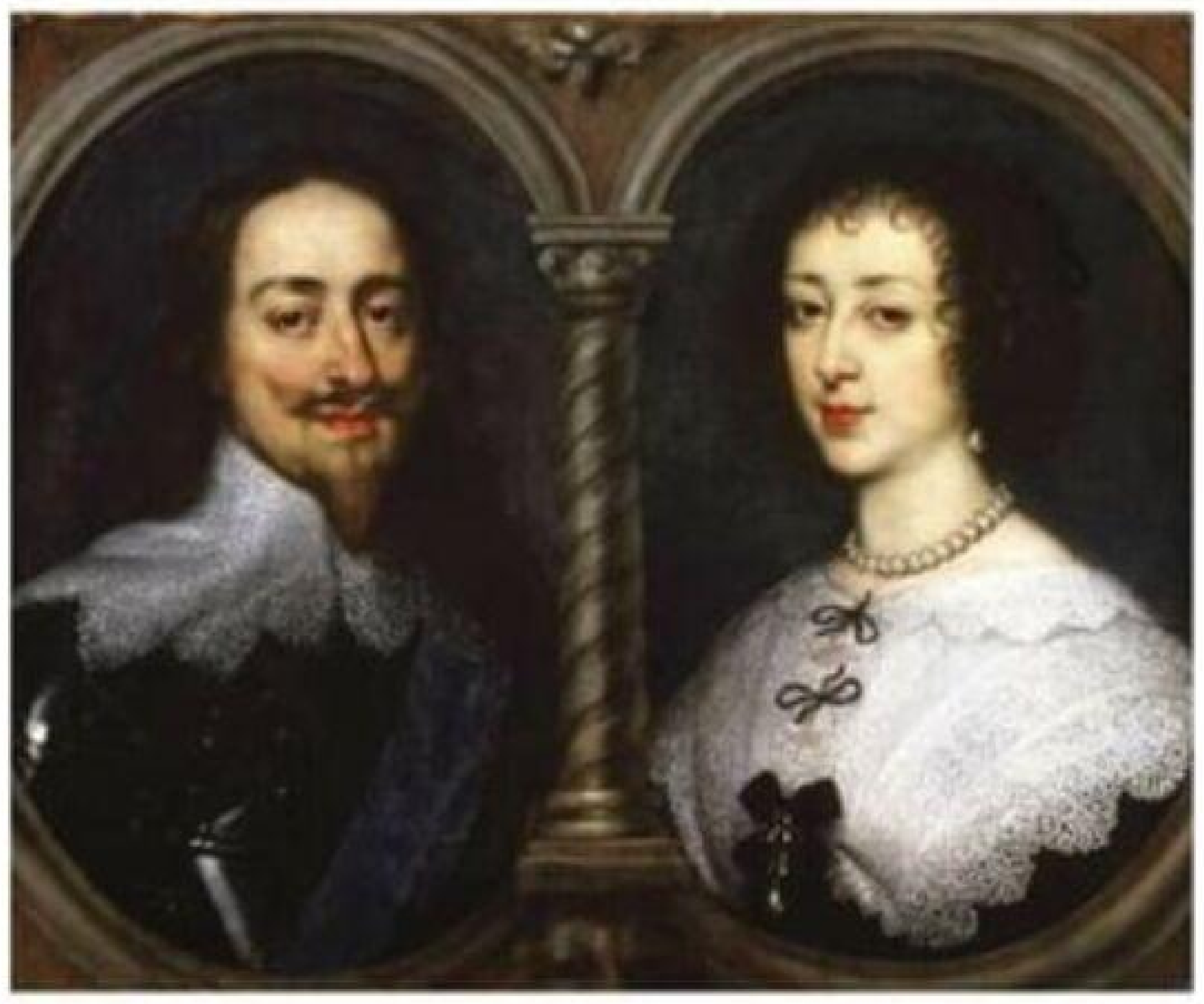
After two parliaments disrupted by opposition to Buckingham's influence, anxiety over Charles's religious policies and disagreements over taxation and foreign policy, **Charles levies a forced loan on taxpayers** to fund wars with Spain and, from 1627, with France.

2 March 1629

The **recalled parliament ends in chaos.** When Charles comes to dissolve it, MPs hold the Speaker forcibly in his chair and issue a protest against issues such as popery and the levying of customs dues without a grant from parliament. Charles will not call another parliament for 11 years.

1625

1630



Charles I and his French Catholic queen consort Henrietta Maria, painted by Anthony van Dyck

11 May 1625

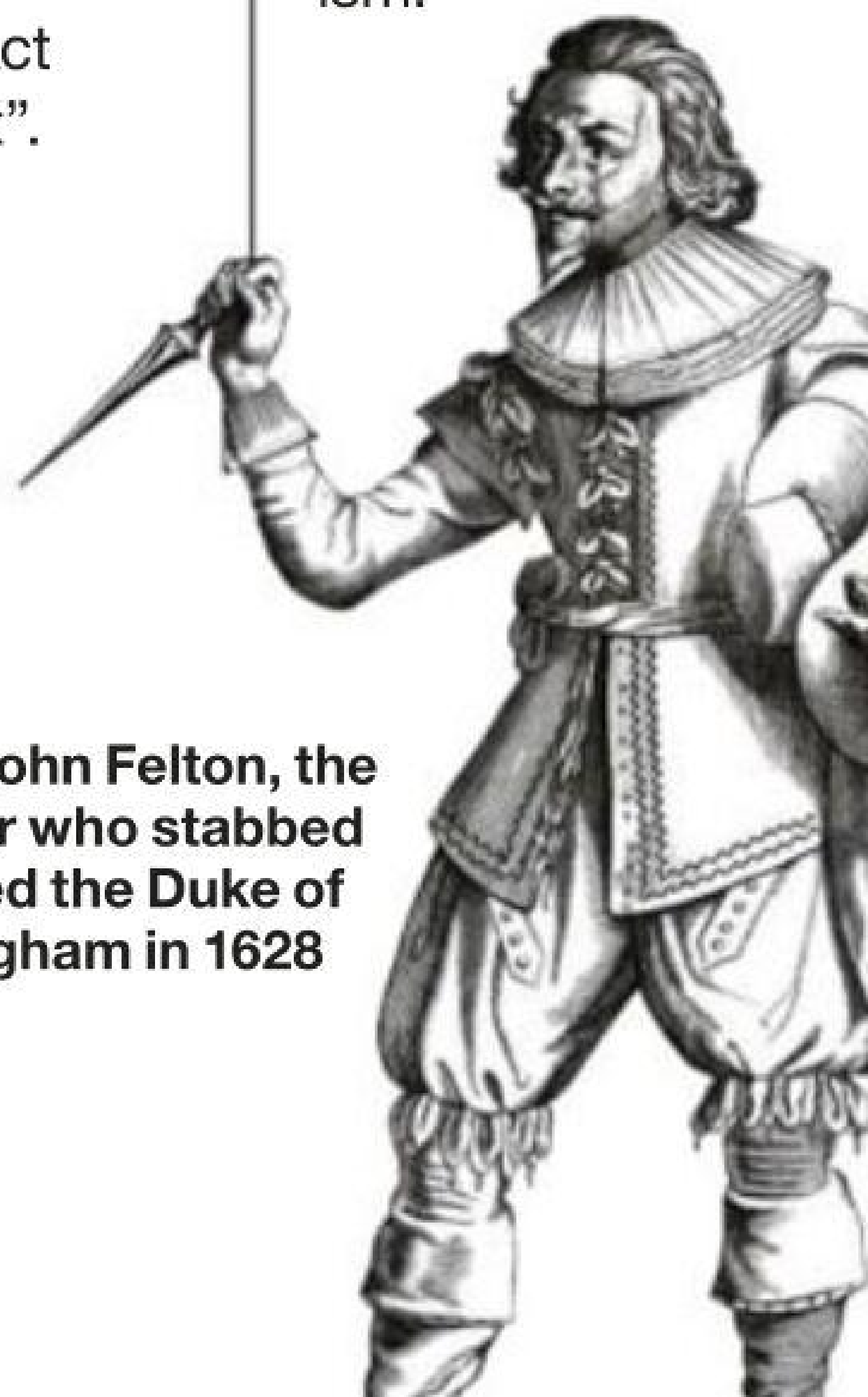
Charles marries Henrietta Maria, sister of the French King Louis XIII. Despite initial tensions caused by her zealous Catholicism and the influence of her French entourage, the royal love affair becomes one of the "central motifs of his kingship", as described by historian Richard Cust.

7 June 1628

The Petition of Right is accepted by Charles. Drawn up by parliament as a response to the forced loan, martial law and billeting of troops on civilians, it appeals to Magna Carta and forbids taxation without "common consent by Act of Parliament".

23 August 1628

The Duke of Buckingham is stabbed to death by John Felton, an embittered soldier disgusted by what he sees as the mismanagement of the war with France. Many hail Felton as a hero, believing he has destroyed a tyrant and defended Protestantism.

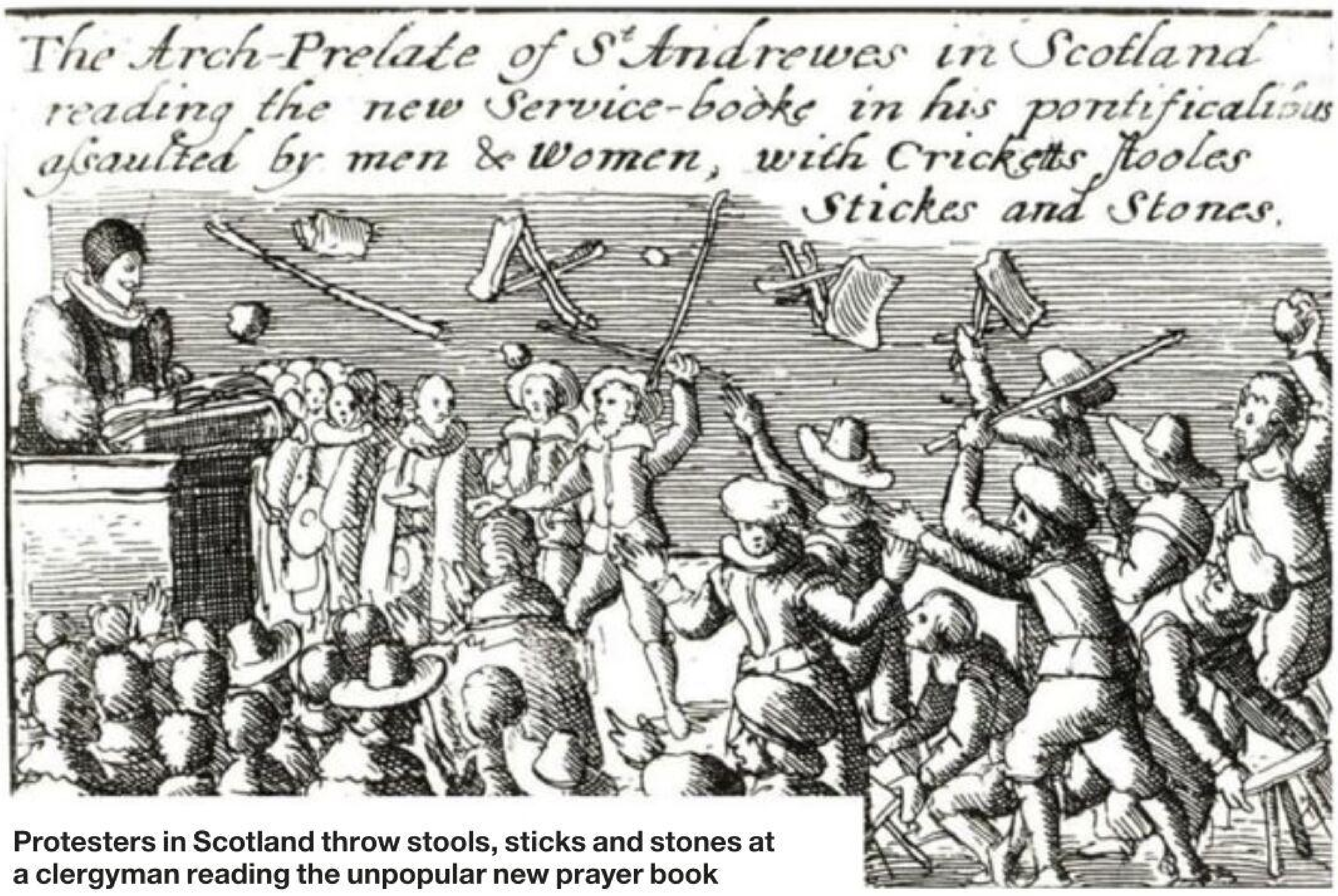


John Felton, the soldier who stabbed and killed the Duke of Buckingham in 1628

18 October 1633

Charles reissues his father's declaration of 1618 **encouraging the playing of 'lawful sports' on Sundays.** Puritans regard this as an ungodly profanation of the Sabbath, and are affronted by the drive of William Laud, archbishop of Canterbury, to impose altars, rituals and ceremonies on the English church.

ALAMY/BRIDGEMAN/GETTY


The Arch-Prelate of St Andrewes in Scotland
reading the new Service-booke in his pontificalibus
assaulted by men & Women, with Cricketts stooles
Sticks and Stones.

Protesters in Scotland throw stools, sticks and stones at a clergyman reading the unpopular new prayer book

23 July 1637

Riots break out in Edinburgh, protesting against a new prayer book imposed on the Scottish Church against its will. This disquiet leads the following February to the creation of a National Covenant to defend 'true religion'. After inconclusive manoeuvres known as the First Bishops' War, in June 1639 the 'Covenanters' agree a treaty with the king at Berwick.

28 August 1640

Having completed the reform of the Scottish church and raised an army, the Covenanters begin the Second Bishops' War and **defeat the king's forces at the battle of Newburn.**

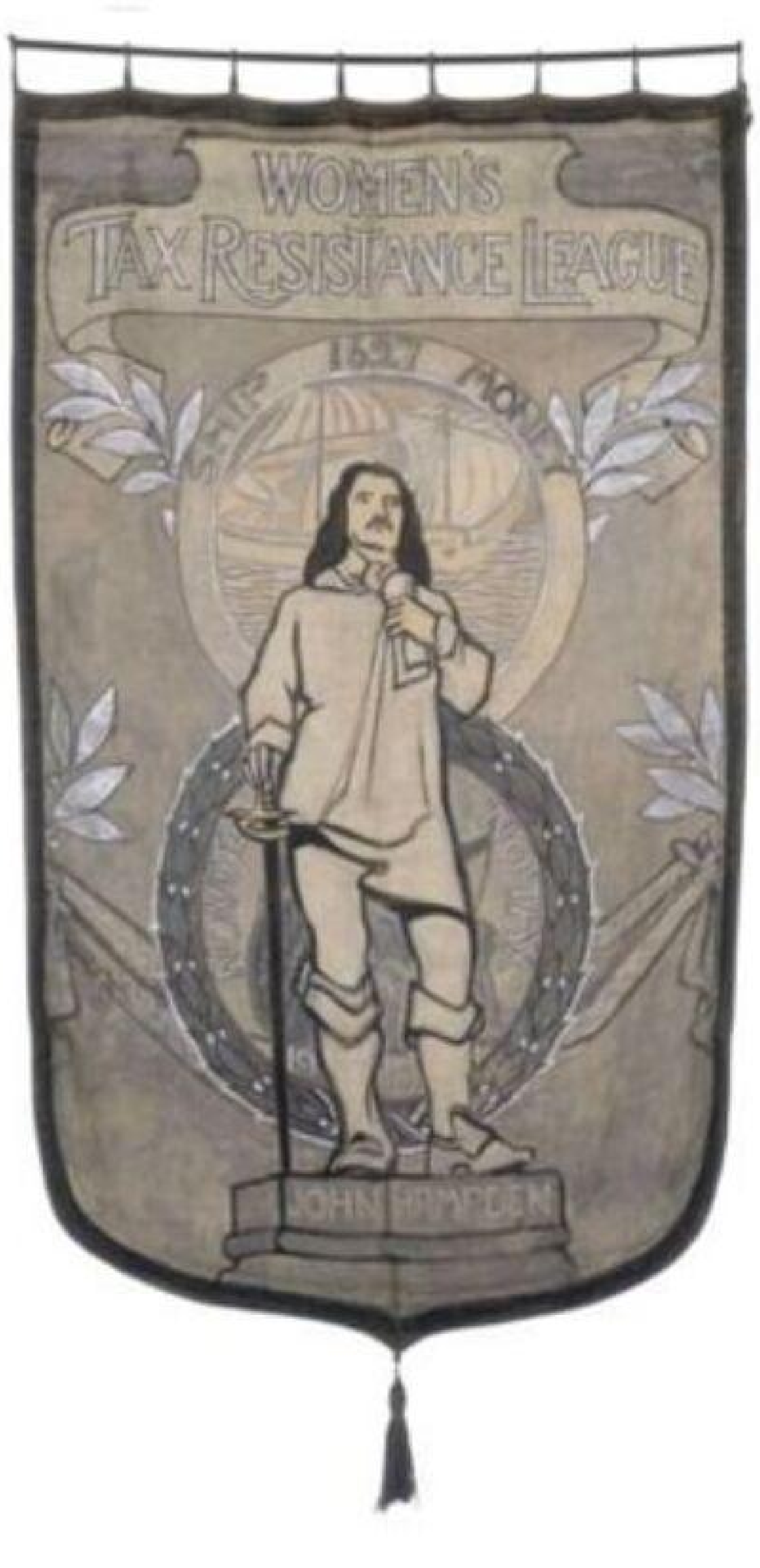
3 November 1640

With Newcastle occupied by the Scots, the City of London refusing to lend to the king without parliamentary guarantees, and petitions from leading peers for a parliament, **Charles is forced to call the so-called Long Parliament.** It lasts, with intervals, until March 1660.

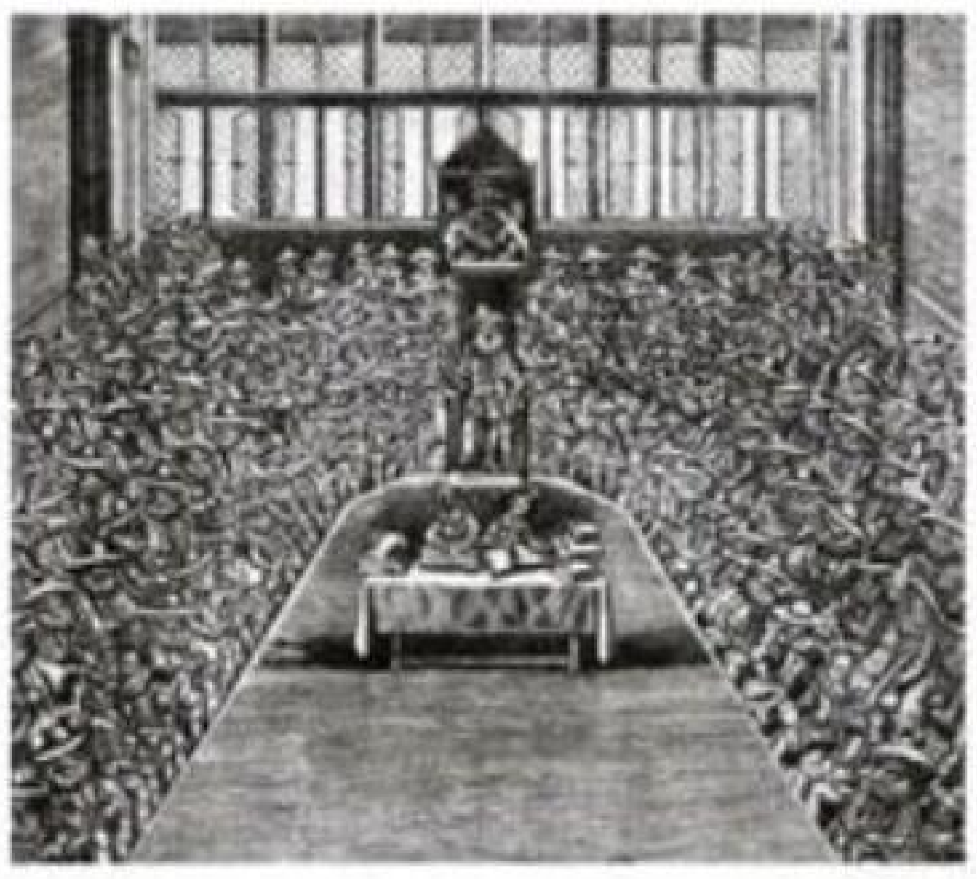
1640

August 1635

Charles issues a second writ to levy Ship Money, the most notorious of the expedients used to finance his government during his 'personal rule' without parliament. Intended as an emergency levy from coastal areas, it is extended to inland counties and raised annually from 1635. A legal challenge by John Hampden is rejected by a majority of the judges in 1638.



John Hampden, who challenged Charles's writ to levy Ship Money. He later became a role model for the Women's Tax Resistance League – part of the women's suffrage movement



13 April 1640

Charles calls the so-called 'Short Parliament' in an attempt to finance his fight with Scotland. It lasts only three weeks before being dissolved when the Commons refuse to support the king against the Scots unless their grievances are addressed.

November 1640–August 1641

Charles's Personal Rule is dismantled. Laud and leading royal advisor the Earl of Strafford are imprisoned, and other royal ministers flee abroad; further measures for strengthening parliament follow, including acts mandating triennial parliaments, prohibiting the dissolution of parliament without its consent, and declaring Ship Money illegal.

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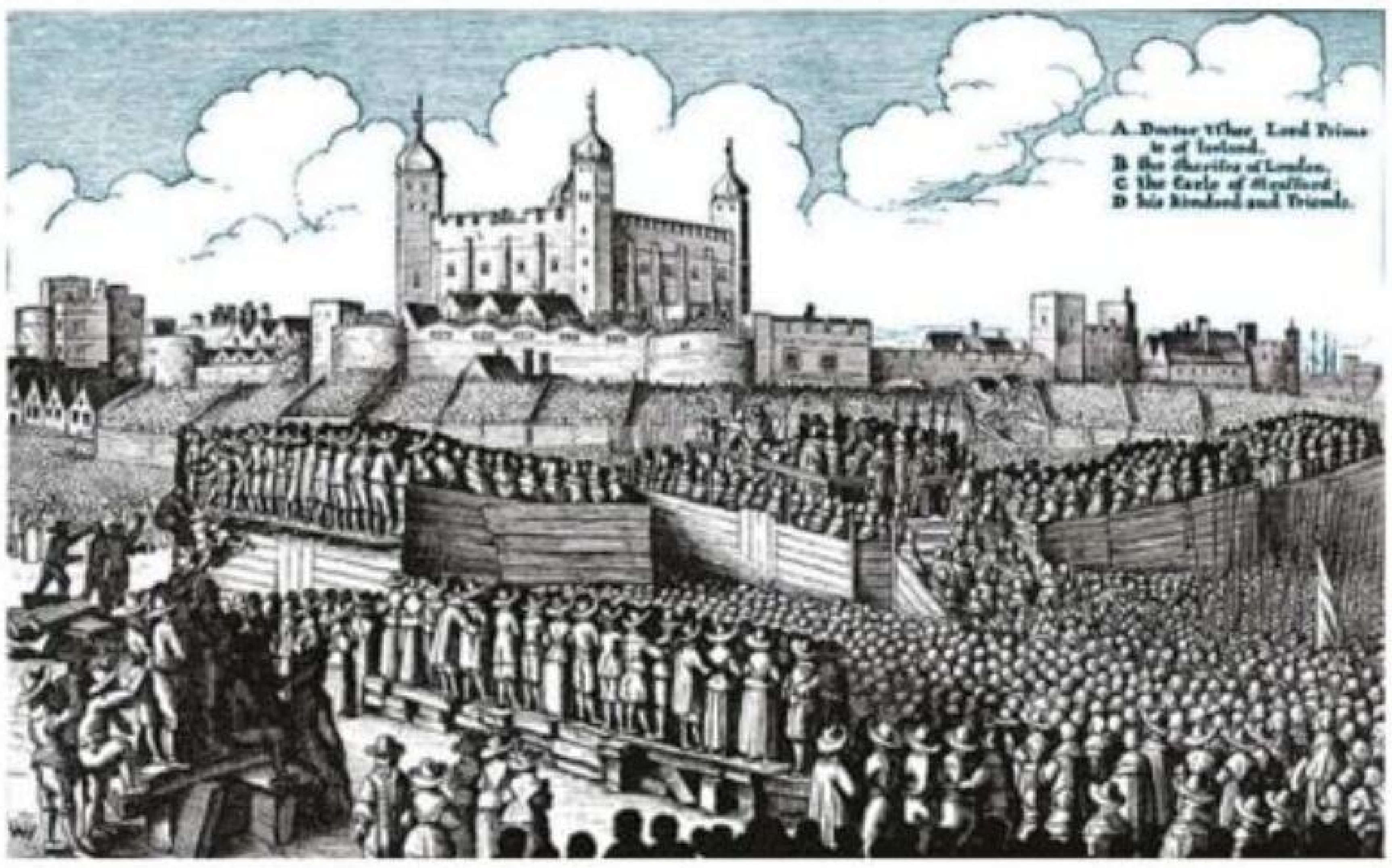
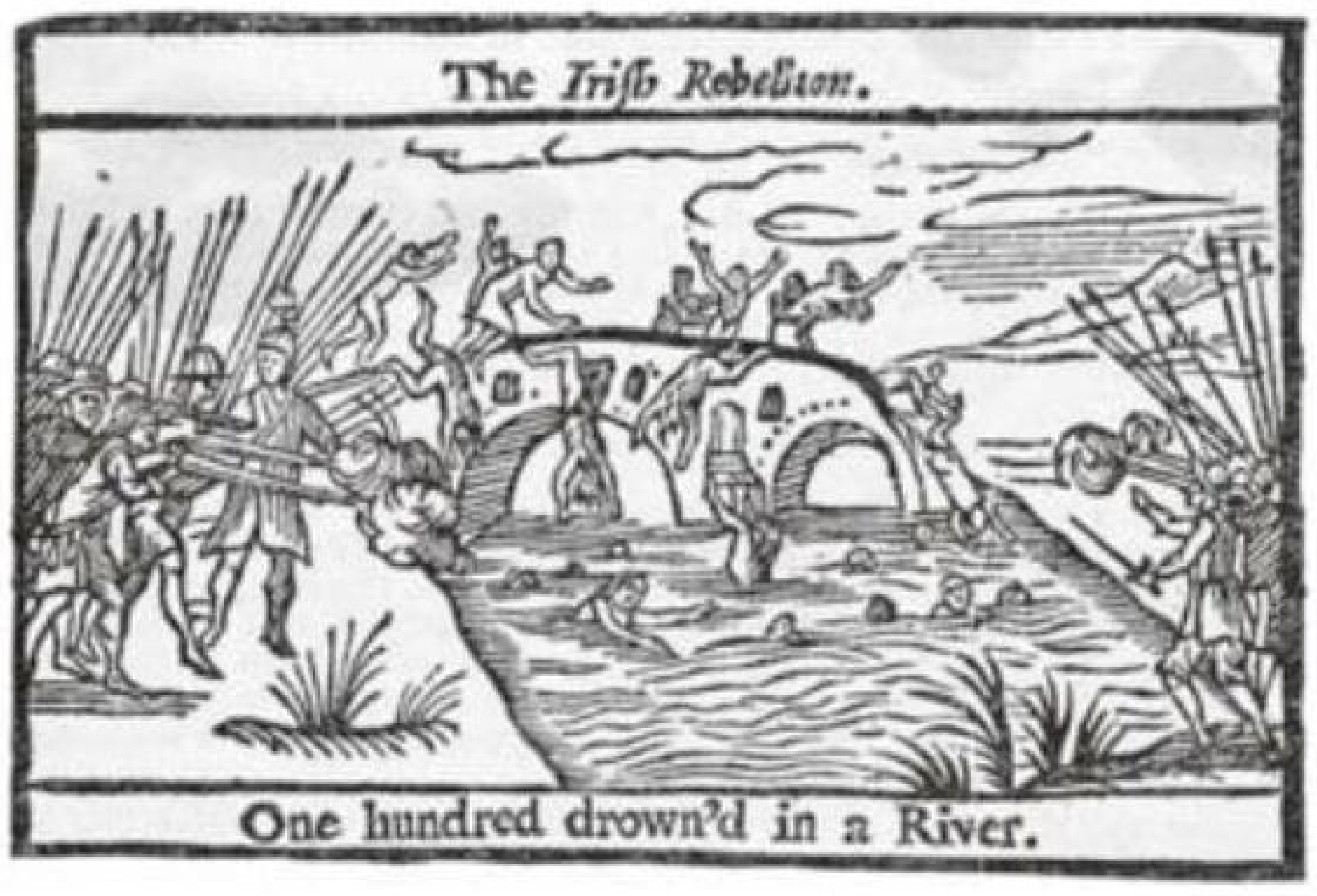


The Earl of Strafford, a leading advisor to Charles I, is executed on Tower Hill on 12 May 1641 after a bill of attainder is signed by the king

3 May 1641

Following the discovery of a plot by the king's supporters to seize the Tower of London and release Strafford, condemned as a traitor by parliament, the **Commons take a Protestation** – an oath to defend true religion, the king's person and the liberty of the subject. Strafford is executed on 12 May; the Protestation is later taken throughout the kingdom for subjects to sign.


The Iriſh Rebellion.
One hundred drown'd in a River.

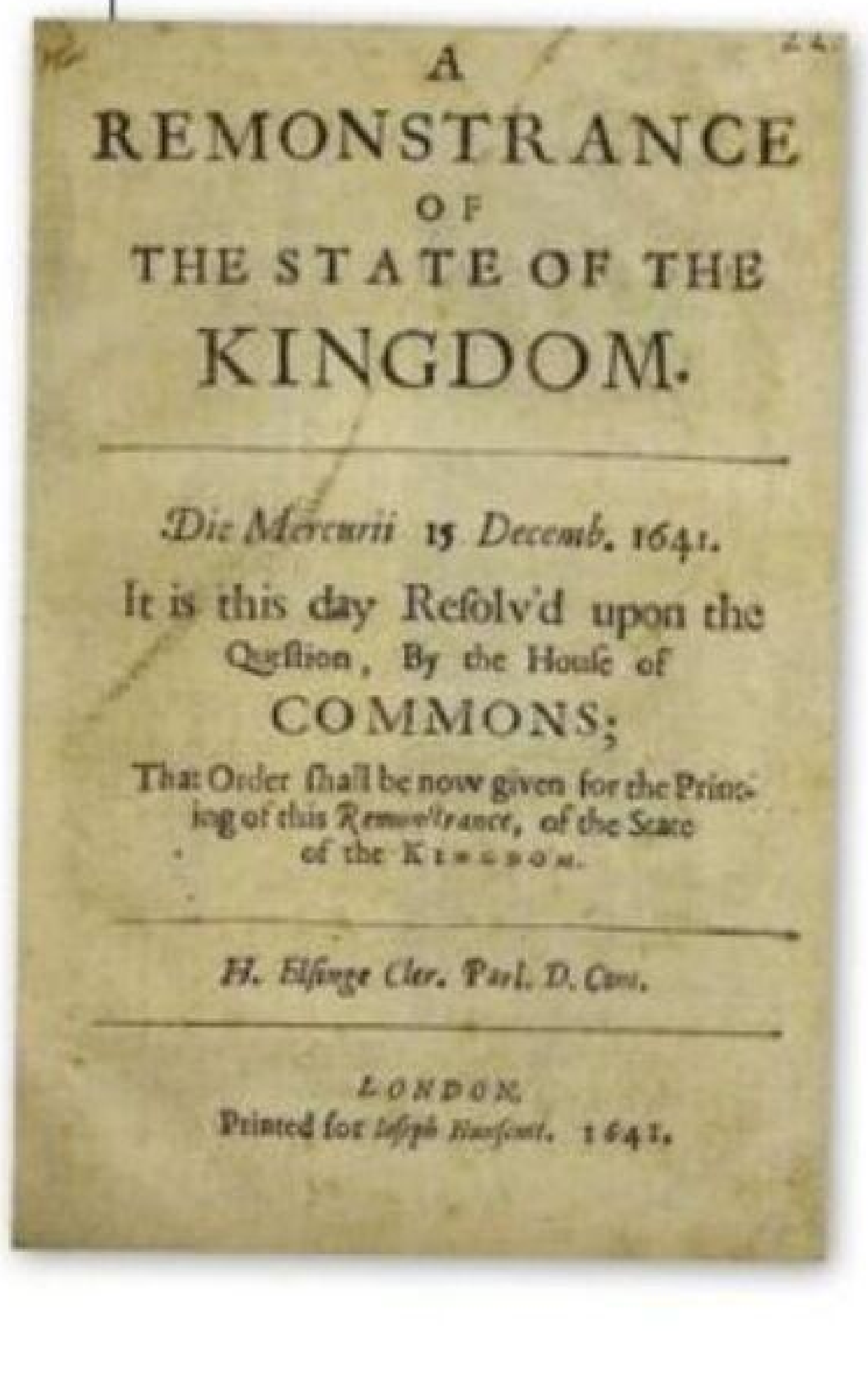
A propaganda illustration depicts a purported massacre of Protestants by Irish Catholics

22 October 1641

A Catholic Irish rebellion breaks out in Ulster, and spreads rapidly. News of the rising reaches London on 1 November, and on 4 November the rebels claim they are acting on the king's behalf. Atrocities against Protestant settlers are wildly exaggerated in sensational English printed propaganda.

23 November 1641

The Grand Remonstrance is agreed in the Commons by 159 votes to 148. A bitter account of Charles's reign, it denounces a "malignant and pernicious design" by the "Jesuited Papists" to destroy true religion and the law. Printed newsbooks flourish during this crisis, and the Remonstrance itself is printed in December.



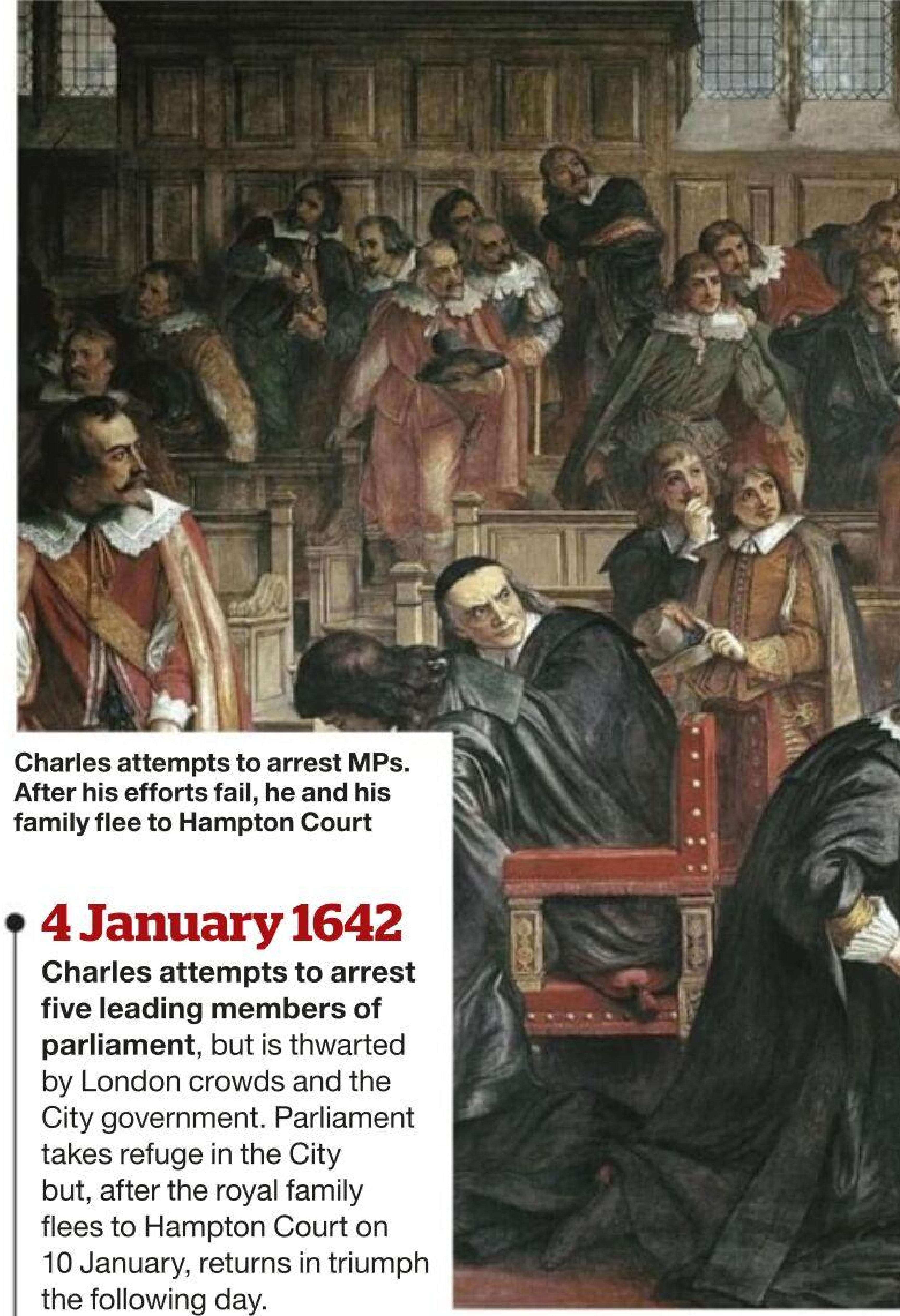
A
REMONSTRANCE
OF
THE STATE OF THE
KINGDOM.

Die Mercurii 15 *Decemb.* 1641.
It is this day Reſolv'd upon the
Queſtion, By the Houſe of
COMMONS;
That Order ſhall be now given for the Printing of this *Remonſtrance*, of the State
of the KINGDOM.

H. Elſinge Cler. Parl. D. Com.

LONDON,
Printed for *Ioſeph Hunſcott.* 1641.

A printed version of the Grand Remonstrance agreed in the Commons – a list of grievances against the king



Charles attempts to arrest MPs. After his efforts fail, he and his family flee to Hampton Court

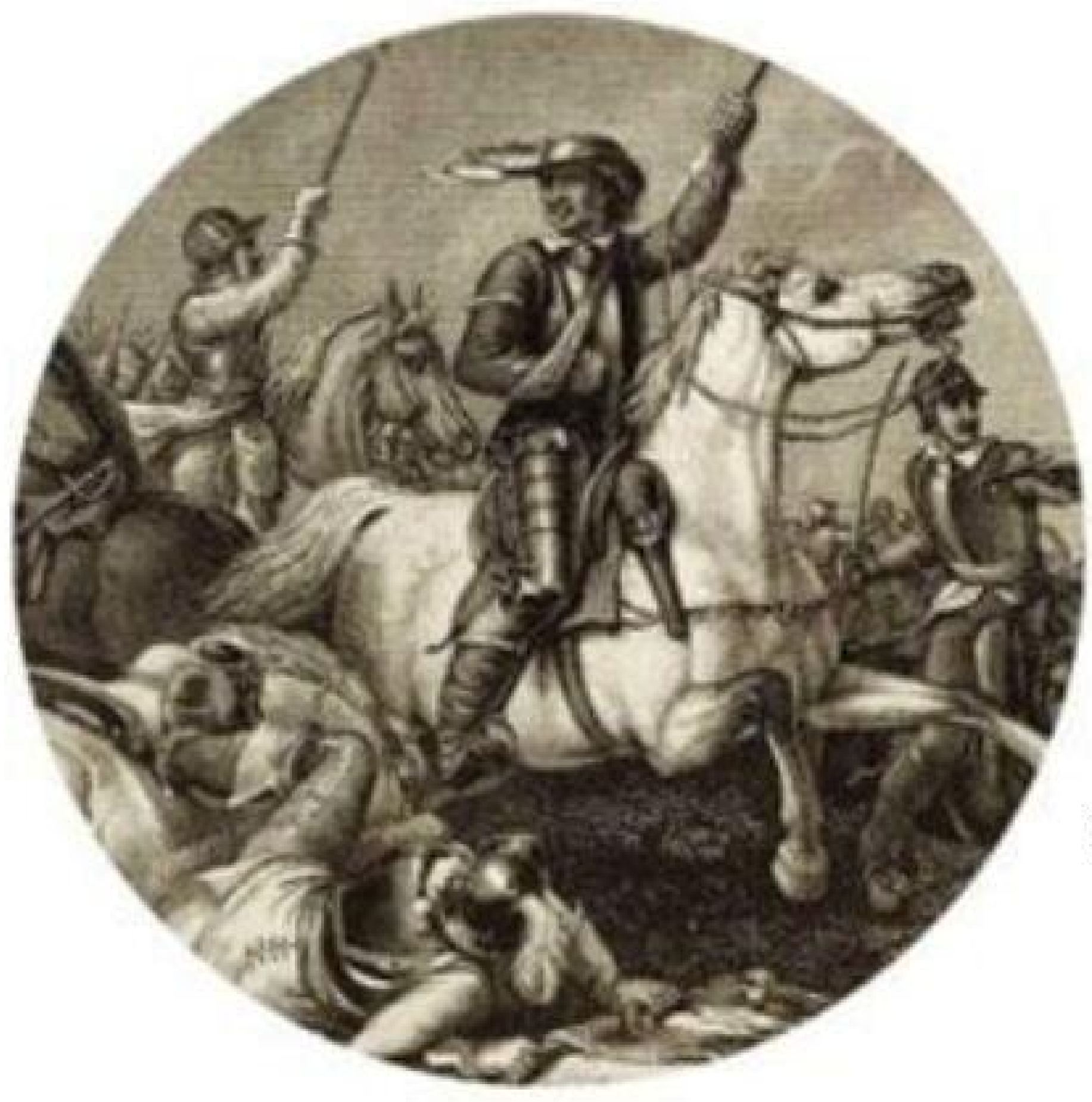
4 January 1642

Charles attempts to arrest five leading members of parliament, but is thwarted by London crowds and the City government. Parliament takes refuge in the City but, after the royal family flees to Hampton Court on 10 January, returns in triumph the following day.

23 April 1642

Charles is denied entrance to Hull and its arsenal, beginning the slide towards war. On 12 July **parliament votes to raise an army under the Earl of Essex** "for the safety of the King's person, defence of both Houses of Parliament … and preserving of the true religion, the laws, liberty and peace of the kingdom". On 22 August Charles raises his standard at Nottingham.

ALAMY/BRIDGEMAN/GETTY



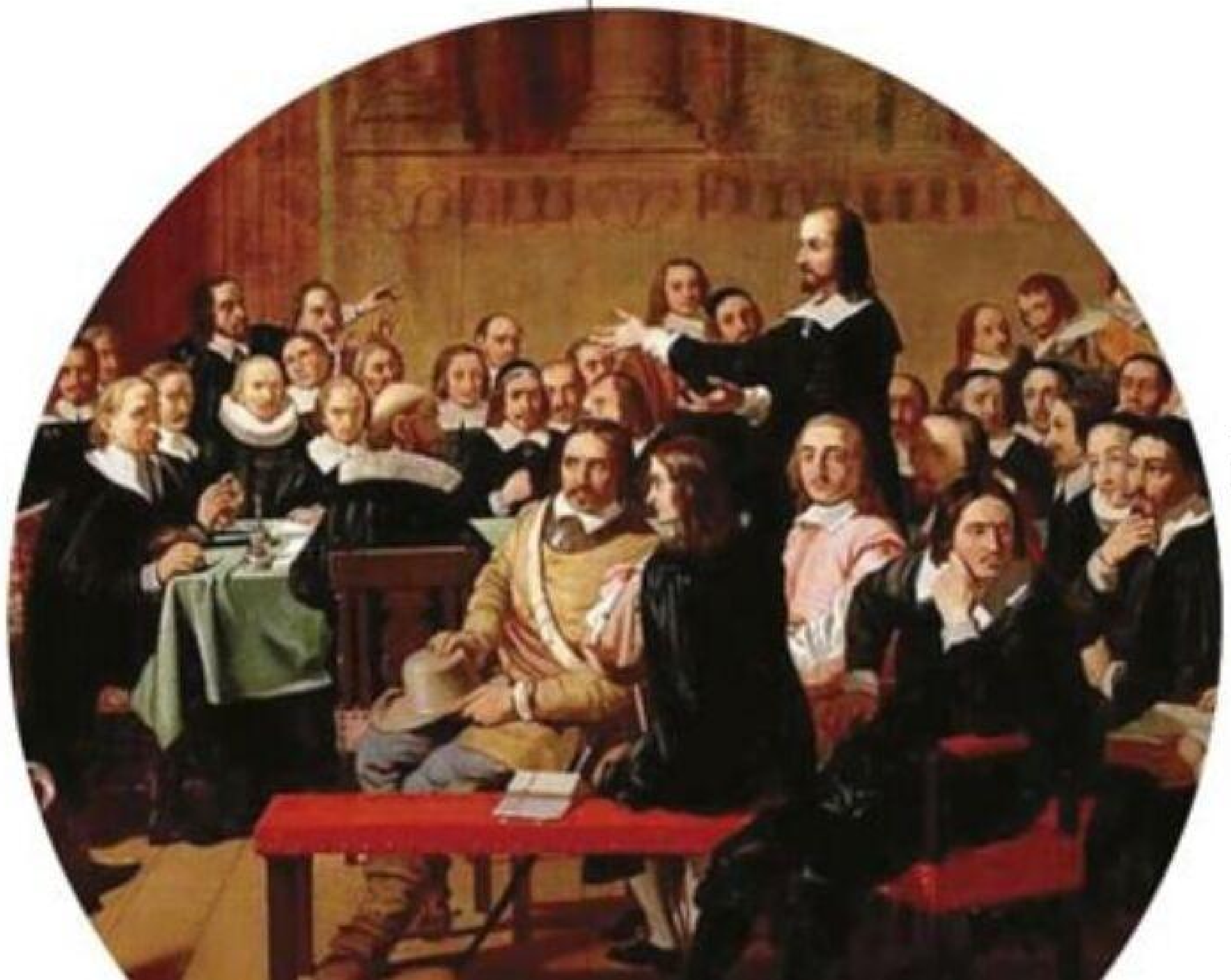
Cromwell, his injured arm in a sling, leads victorious parliamentarian troops at the battle of Marston Moor

23 October 1642

The **first major battle of the war, at Edgehill** in south Warwickshire, ends in stalemate but the way to London is left open to the royalists. At Turnham Green on 13 November royalist forces are repulsed by Essex's army, reinforced by the London militia. They retire to Oxford, which becomes the royalist headquarters.

1 July 1643

The Assembly of Divines, the body established by parliament for reformation of the church, meets for the first time. During the years from 1645 and 1648 a 'Directory of Worship' to replace the Common Prayer Book, and a Presbyterian structure for the English Church, are agreed. However, no national church settlement is ever enforced, allowing a variety of sects to flourish.



A 19th-century painting depicting the Assembly of Divines, the parliamentary body appointed to reform the English church

25 September 1643

A Solemn League and Covenant is taken by the House of Commons and subsequently imposed on all adult males. Symbol of the alliance between the English parliament and the Scots, it calls for the "preservation" of religion in Scotland, but "reformation" of religion in England and Ireland "according to the word of God, and the example of the best reformed Churches".

2 July 1644

Parliamentarian forces are victorious at the battle of Marston Moor near York, the war's largest battle. Some 28,000 parliamentarian troops (most from the Scottish army that entered England in January 1644) face the king's 18,000 men. Cromwell's cavalry plays a crucial part. Victory brings much of northern England under parliament's control.

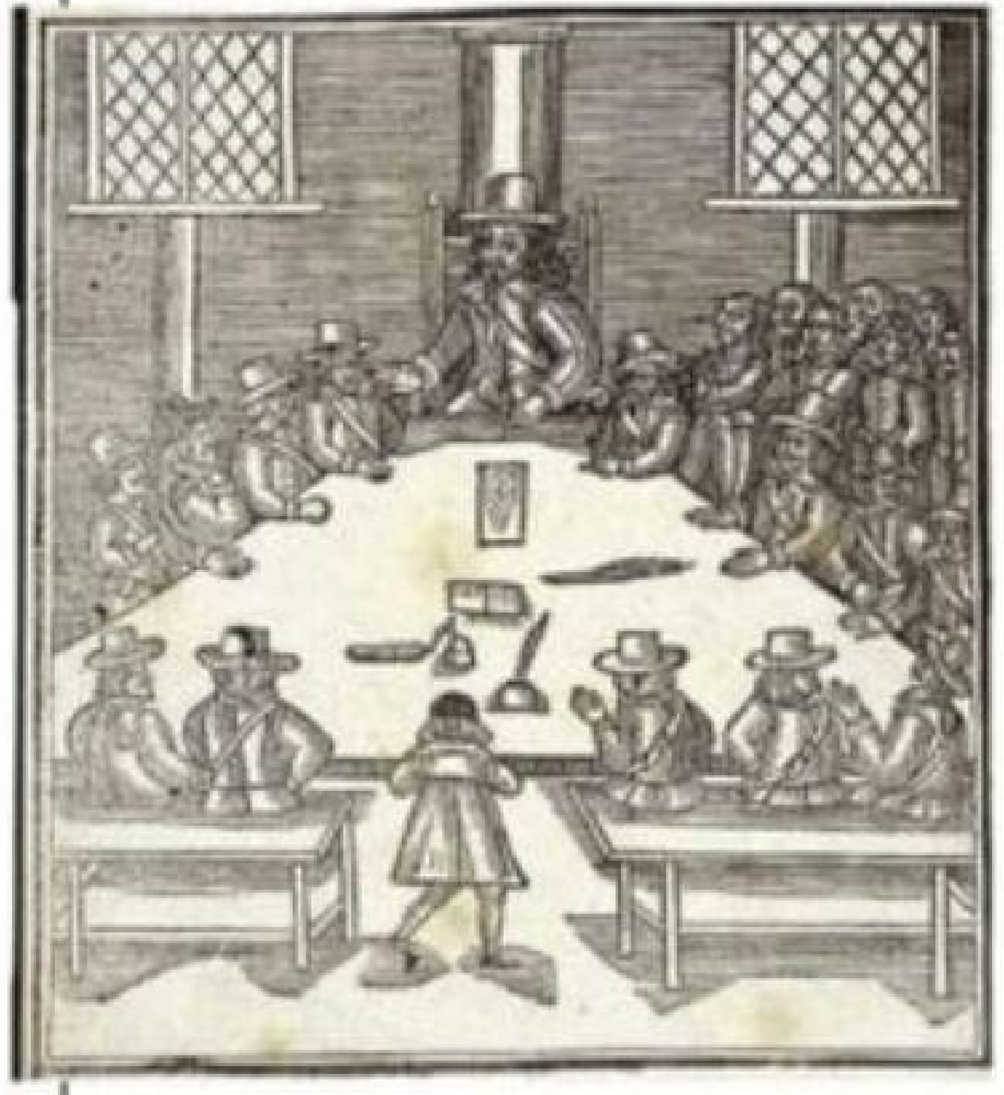
1645

14 June 1645

Parliament's New Model Army wins a decisive victory at the battle of Naseby – a military and political disaster for the king, whose politically incriminating correspondence is captured and published. Royalist women camp followers are slaughtered – the worst civilian atrocity of the English war.

5 May 1646

Charles surrenders to the Scottish army at Southwell, Nottinghamshire, having left Oxford in disguise. Oxford surrenders on 24 June, followed by other strongholds. **The king is handed over to parliament** when the Scots withdraw from England in January 1647, and seized by the army in June 1647.

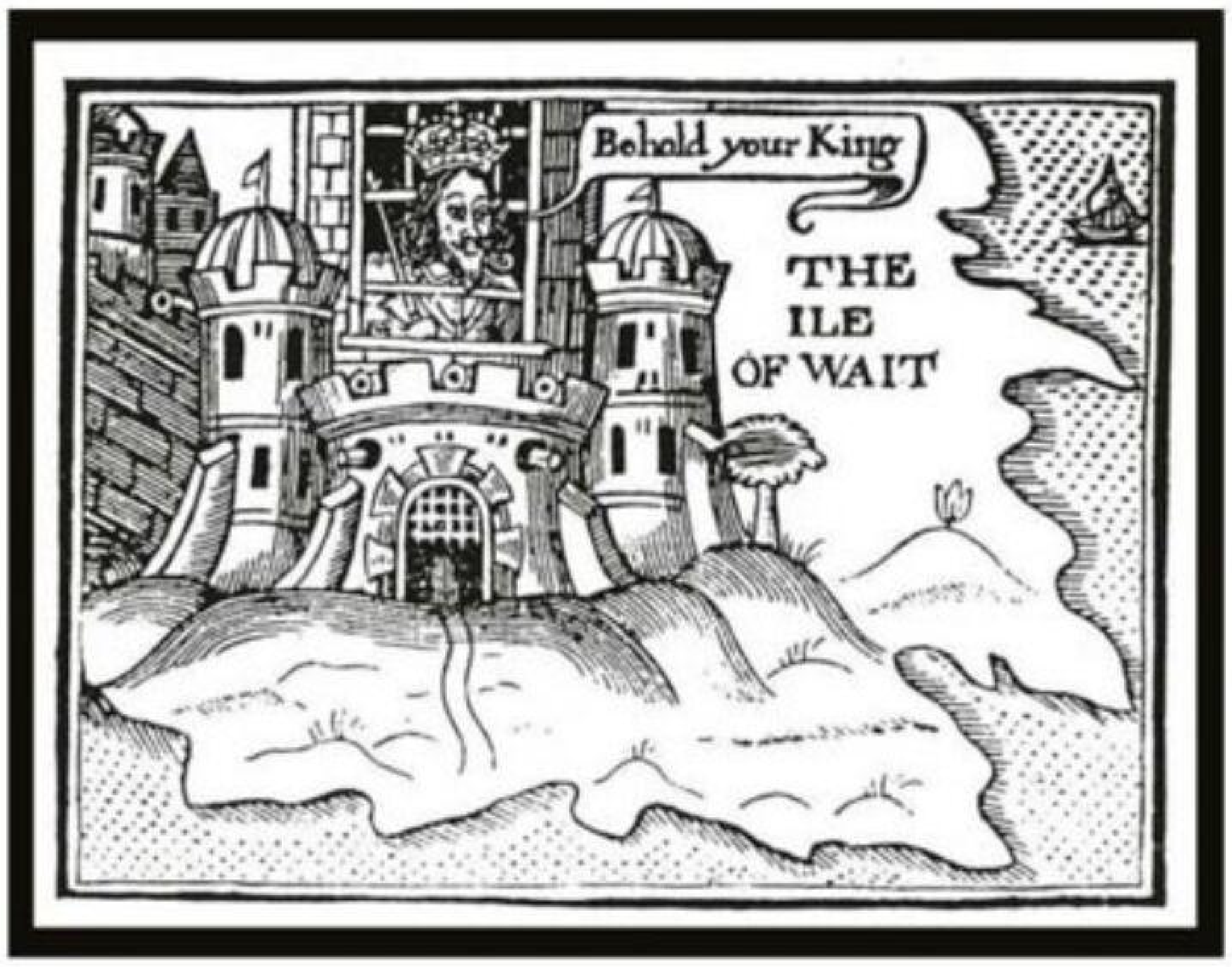


Sir Thomas Fairfax, head of the New Model Army, with the army's General Council

5 June 1647

After months of dispute with parliament, the New Model Army declares "We were not a mere mercenary army" and vows not to disband without settlement of its own grievances and the people's religious and political liberties. In August, **the army occupies London** to forestall a Presbyterian settlement with the king.

PALACE OF WESTMINSTER/GETTY



Charles is shown behind bars in Carisbrooke Castle on the Isle of Wight, where he had fled in 1647, only to be imprisoned there

December 1647

After escaping to the Isle of Wight, **Charles signs an Engagement (treaty) with the Scots,** sparking renewed conflict. Revolts against parliament break out in Wales and south-east England. The Scots are defeated at Preston on 17 August 1648; Colchester, the last royalist stronghold, surrenders on 27 August after a brutal siege.

15 August 1649

Cromwell and his army land in Dublin Bay to retake land lost to the Irish Confederation, formed after a major rising in 1641. On 11 September, his troops seize Drogheda, massacring defeated soldiers before heading south and taking Wexford in similarly bloody fashion. The following March, his army captures the Confederation's capital, Kilkenny, then sustains heavy losses taking Clonmel in May.

Charles II is advised to hide in an oak tree after defeat at the battle of Worcester in 1651, as depicted in an 18th-century coloured engraving

3 September 1651

Cromwell defeats Charles II and a largely Scottish army at the battle of Worcester. Charles II, who had been crowned by the Scots in January 1651, survives the battle and, after many narrow escapes, reaches France six weeks later. This 'crowning mercy' confirms English dominance over Britain and Ireland, whose conquest is almost complete.

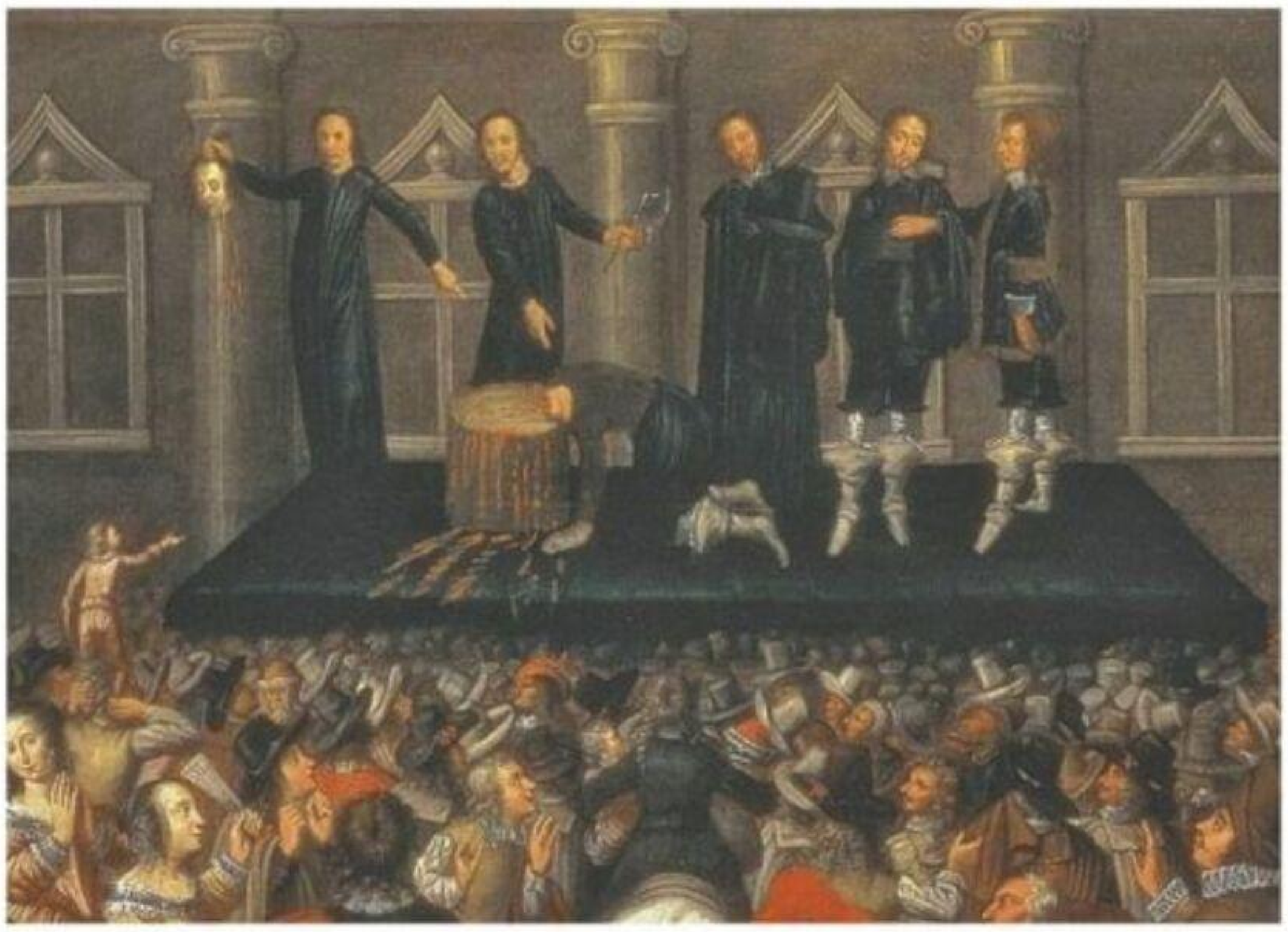
1650

28 October 1647

The Council of the Army, with representatives of the rank and file as well as officers, **debate the settlement of the kingdom** at St Mary's Church, Putney. On 29 October they discuss *An Agreement of the People*, a manifesto produced by radicals who become known as Levellers.

6 December 1648

With parliament on the verge of making peace with the king, **Colonel Thomas Pride of the New Model Army forcibly imprisons or excludes more than 200 MPs** from the Commons. The 'Rump Parliament', the Commonwealth government comprising a purged Commons and a Council of State, is subsequently established.



The beheading of Charles I at Whitehall, London, in January 1649, painted after an eyewitness account

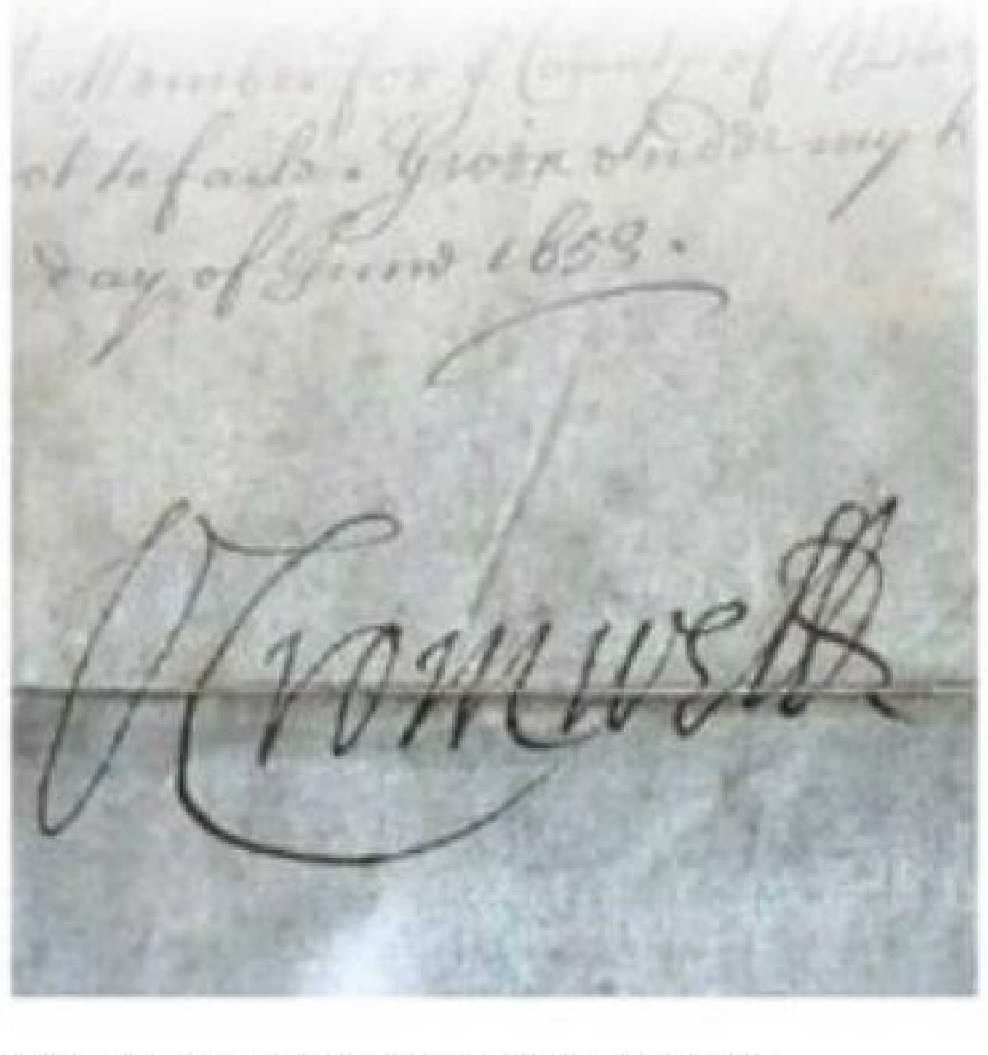
30 January 1649

Charles I is executed after a trial that began on 20 January, having refused to recognise the legitimacy of the process and being condemned as a "tyrant, traitor, murderer, and public enemy to the good people of this nation". **The office of king is formally abolished** on 17 March 1649.

ALAMY

20 April 1653

Exasperated by parliament's resistance to reform, and anxious about a future settlement, **Cromwell and the army forcibly dissolve the 'Rump Parliament'**. The army nominates 140 members to a civilian parliament, known (after one of its more obscure members) as 'The Barebones Parliament'.



Given under my

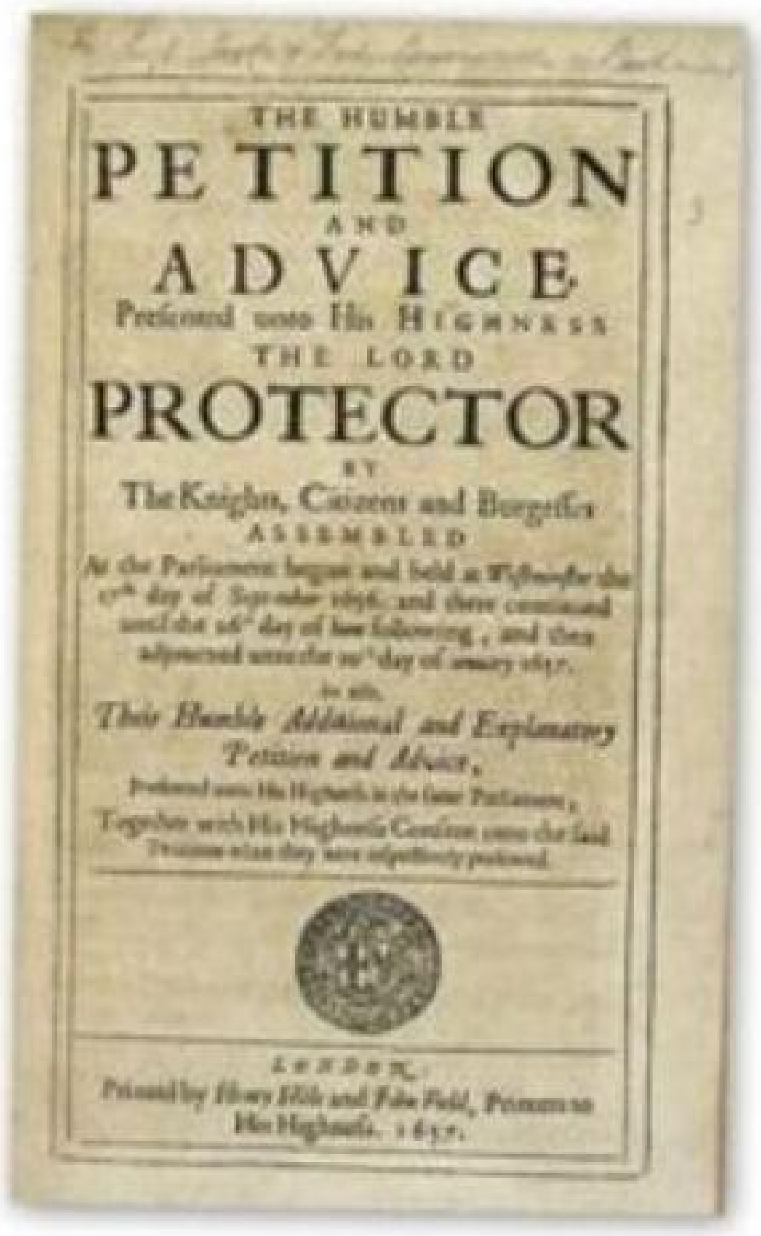
day of June 1653.

O Cromwell

The writ of summons to the 'Barebones Parliament', signed by Oliver Cromwell

16 December 1653

Following the failure and resignation of the nominated parliament, a written constitution, **the Instrument of Government, establishes Oliver Cromwell as Lord Protector** of the three nations of England, Scotland and Ireland, ruling with a regular parliament and a Council. Religious liberty for Protestants is guaranteed.



THE HUMBLE
PETITION
AND
ADVICE
Presented unto His HIGHNESS
THE LORD
PROTECTOR
BY
The Knights, Citizens and Burgesses
ASSEMBLED

Their Humble Additional and Explanatory
Petition and Advice,

LONDON,
Printed by Henry Hills and John Field, Printers to
His Highness. 1657.

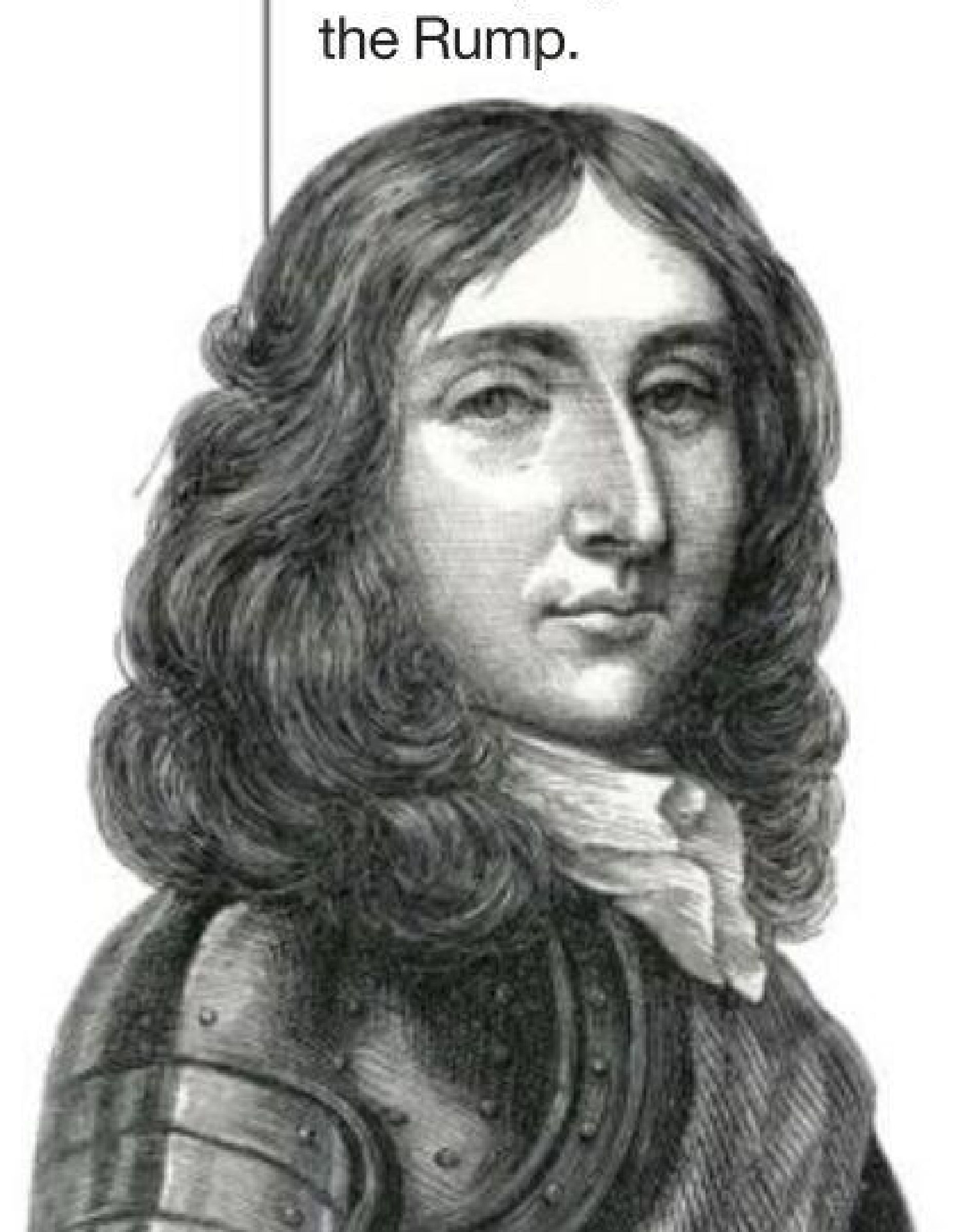
The *Humble Petition and Advice*, a document proposing a new type of government and offering Oliver Cromwell the title of king

25 May 1657

Cromwell's second **parliament agrees 'The Humble Petition and Advice',** a move towards a more familiar form of government after the unpopular experiment in 'godly rule' through Major Generals who governed parts of England and Wales from 1655–6. Cromwell refuses the title of king but has the right to nominate his successor.

3 September 1658

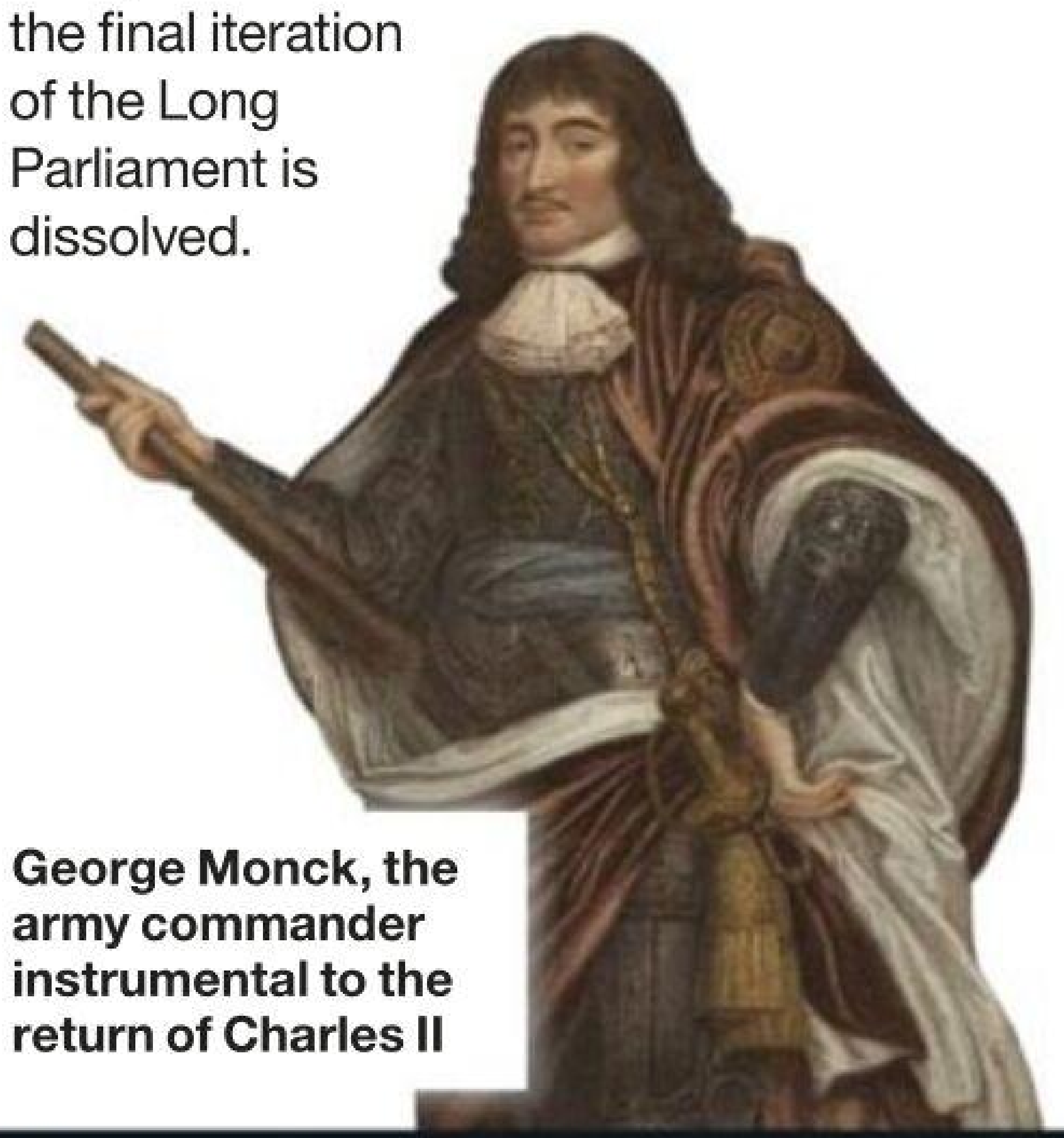
Oliver Cromwell dies, sparking a period of conflict and instability. His eldest son, Richard, (pictured below) succeeds him but is overthrown by the army in April 1659, and the Rump is recalled in May. After crushing Sir George Booth's Presbyterian/Royalist rising in August 1659, the army again dissolves the Rump.



1660

1 January 1660

General George Monck, the English commander in Scotland, enters England with his army, exasperated by civilian-military divisions and increasing disorder in England. On 21 February he readmits to the Rump members excluded in 1648, and on 16 March the final iteration of the Long Parliament is dissolved.



George Monck, the army commander instrumental to the return of Charles II

29 May 1660

On his 30th, birthday, **Charles II enters London as king**. On 4 April he had issued the 'Declaration' of Breda, offering a "free and general pardon", and on 1 May the Convention parliament voted to invite him to return. H

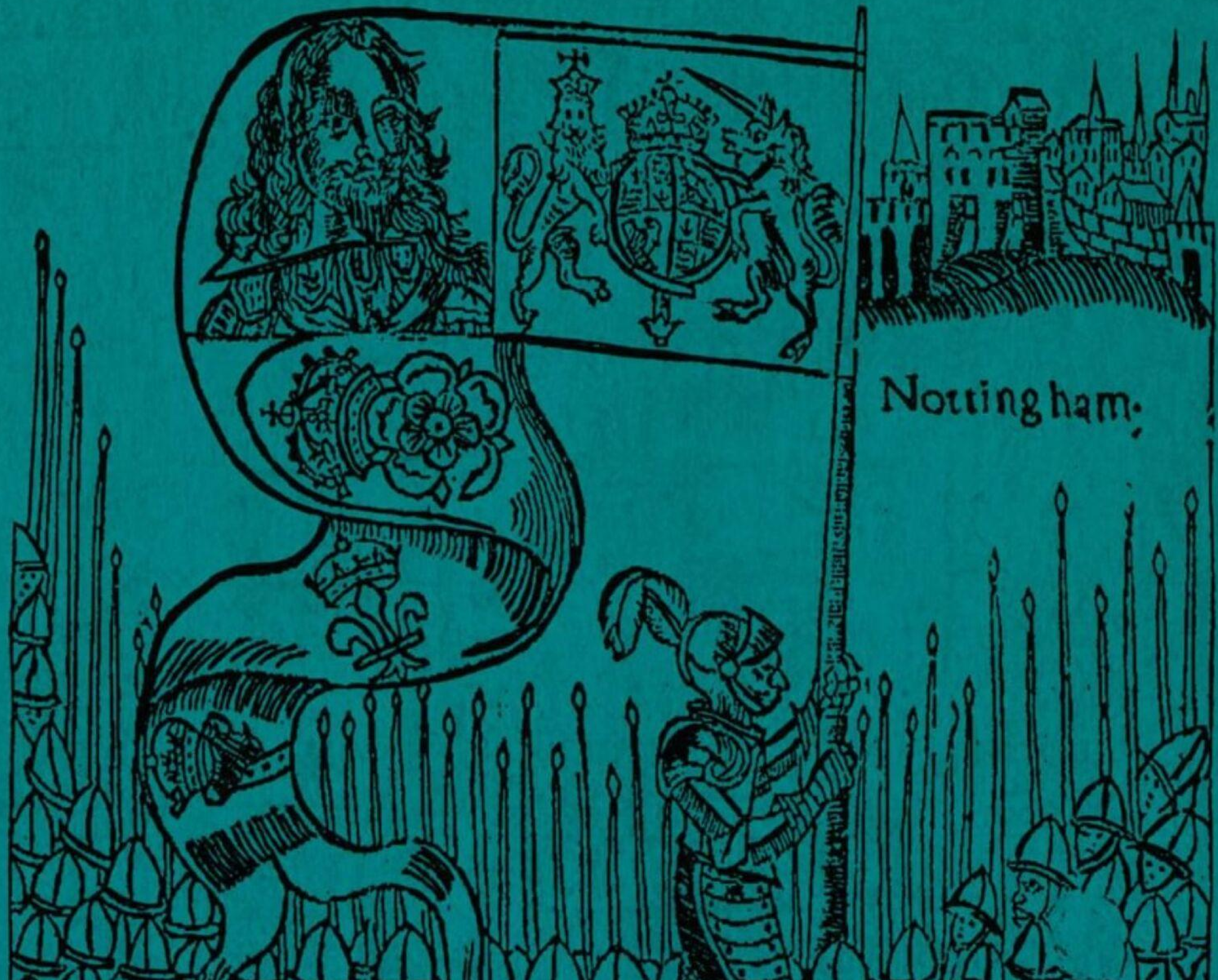
Ann Hughes is professor of early modern history, emeritus, at Keele University

REX/BRIDGEMAN/ALAMY/GETTY

THE TO

- **Rising of the rebel lords**
  The conspiracy that pitted nobles against their ruler
- **Charles I: neither martyr nor traitor**
  Insights into the king's character, motives and mistakes
- **The making of a military genius**
  How Oliver Cromwell became a battle-winning warrior
- **Key clashes**
  Explore eight battle sites across Britain and Ireland
- **Charles I's secret agent**
  The royalist woman who acted as smuggler and spy
- **The great misconceptions of the Civil War**
  Experts explode ten common myths about the conflict

PATH WAR


Nottingham.

BRIDGEMAN

RISING OF THE

The Civil War didn't simply pit parliament against lords. **John Adamson** explains the overlooked part of rebellious republican-leaning nobles in the start of the conflict

BRIDGEMAN

REBEL LORDS

A right royal rebellion Charles I attempts to arrest the rebel peers' accomplices in the House of Commons, 1642

IN CONTEXT

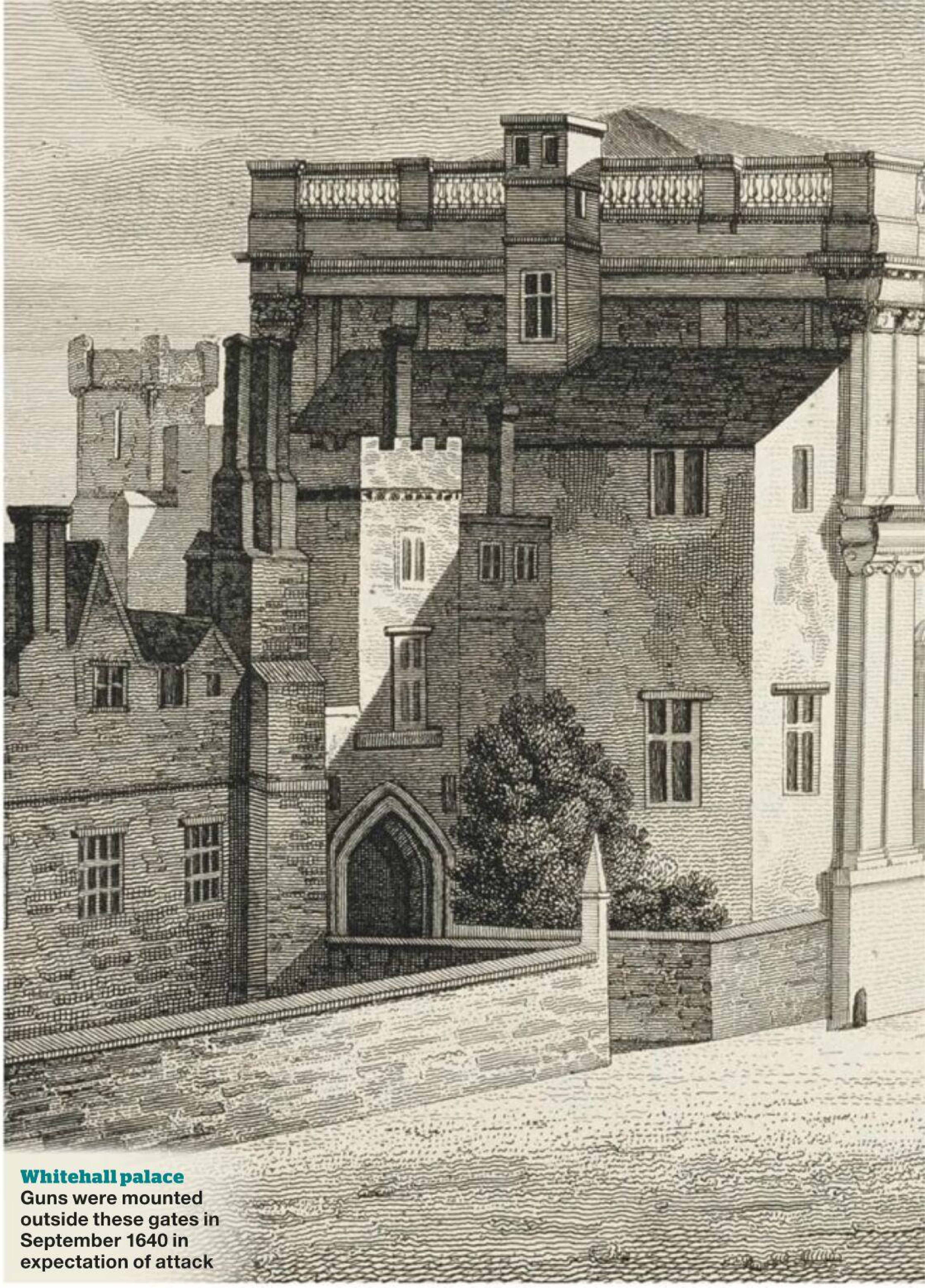
Challenging the traditional line

Charles I's defeat by the Scots at Newburn in August 1640 was the culmination of a decade of ambitious, and ultimately disastrous, royal policy towards his native country. The spark to the revolt was the king's imposition, in July 1637, of a new (and seemingly 'popish') prayer book on the Scottish Church. Protests against this new prayer book rapidly escalated into a nationwide rebellion against Charles's rule, and by 1639 led to the creation of a *de facto* aristocratic republic in Scotland. Rather than offer concessions to the rebels, Charles went to war, first in 1639 and then again in 1640 (which ended in the catastrophe at Newburn). The war brought financial collapse, creating circumstances in which England's dissident noblemen could not only challenge but also coerce their king.

Historians' interpretations of this crisis over recent decades have tended to regard religion almost exclusively as the source of the divisions that produced civil war in England in 1642, suggesting that the country was relatively united, and that only the Scots' victory at Newburn (and their demands for a far more radical "further reformation" of the church) created the impetus for war.

I'd argue instead that 'religion' and 'constitutional issues' cannot be separated. All sides regarded the two as interdependent, viewing religious reforms as insubstantial unless backed by political structures. From as early as 1640, the dissident nobles and their allies sought an ambitious transformation of the Stuart monarchy into an aristocratic republic presided over by a figurehead king. And their strategy worked. By the summer of 1641, the aristocratic reformists had largely achieved their goals, seizing control of almost every one of England's major political and military offices, and reducing the position of the monarch to what Charles himself termed that of a "Duke [ie Doge] of Venice".

That Charles would attempt to overthrow this new political order was never in doubt. In fact, his actions followed logically from positions both sides had taken in 1640, when a doctrine of parliamentarian resistance theory had first been formulated. Political ideas were, therefore, firmly at the centre of the conflicts of 1640–42, not as the mutually exclusive alternative to religious zeal but as its complement. A massive ideological gulf separated the two sides, in questions of government no less than in matters of religion.



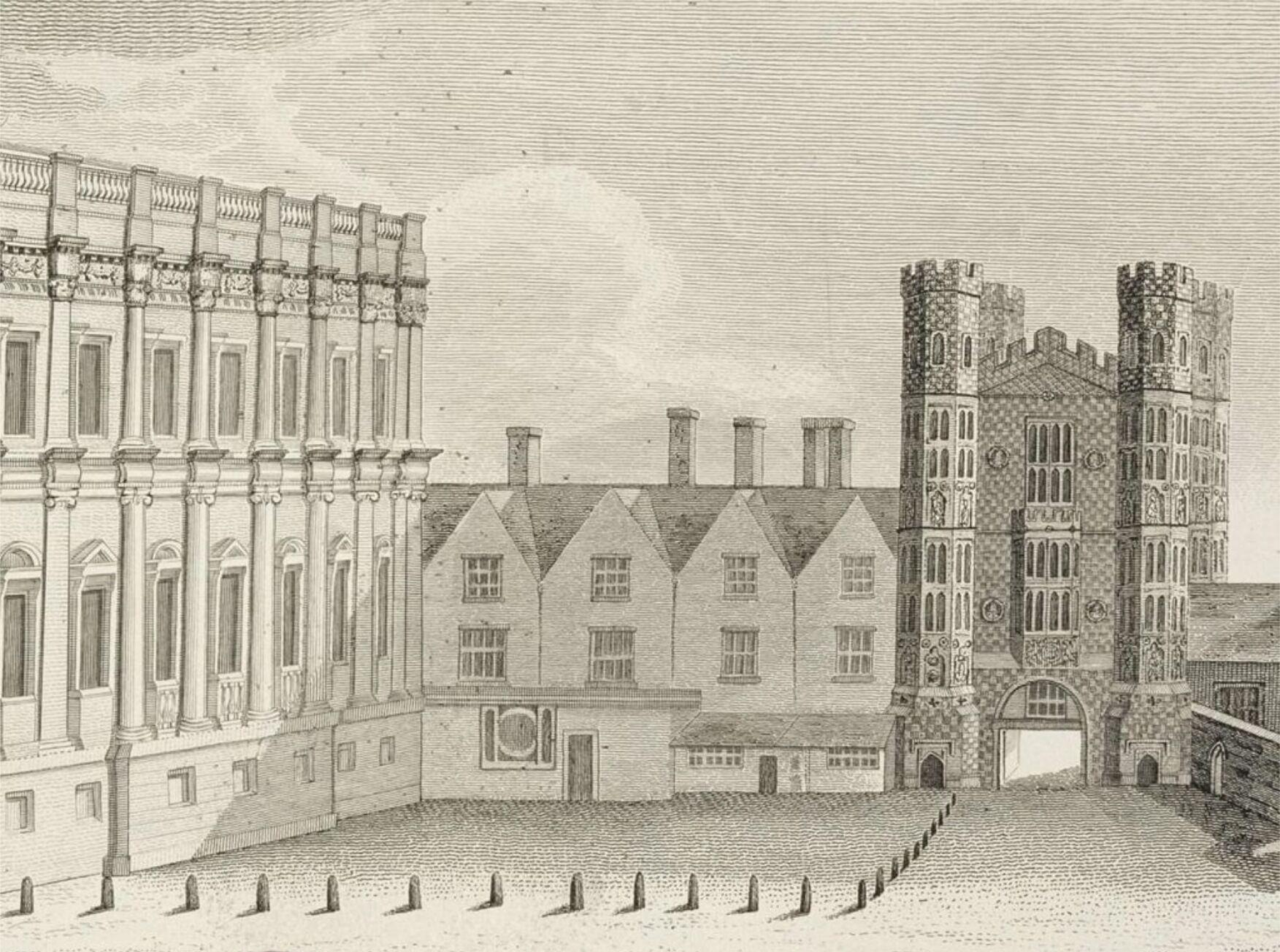
Whitehall palace Guns were mounted outside these gates in September 1640 in expectation of attack

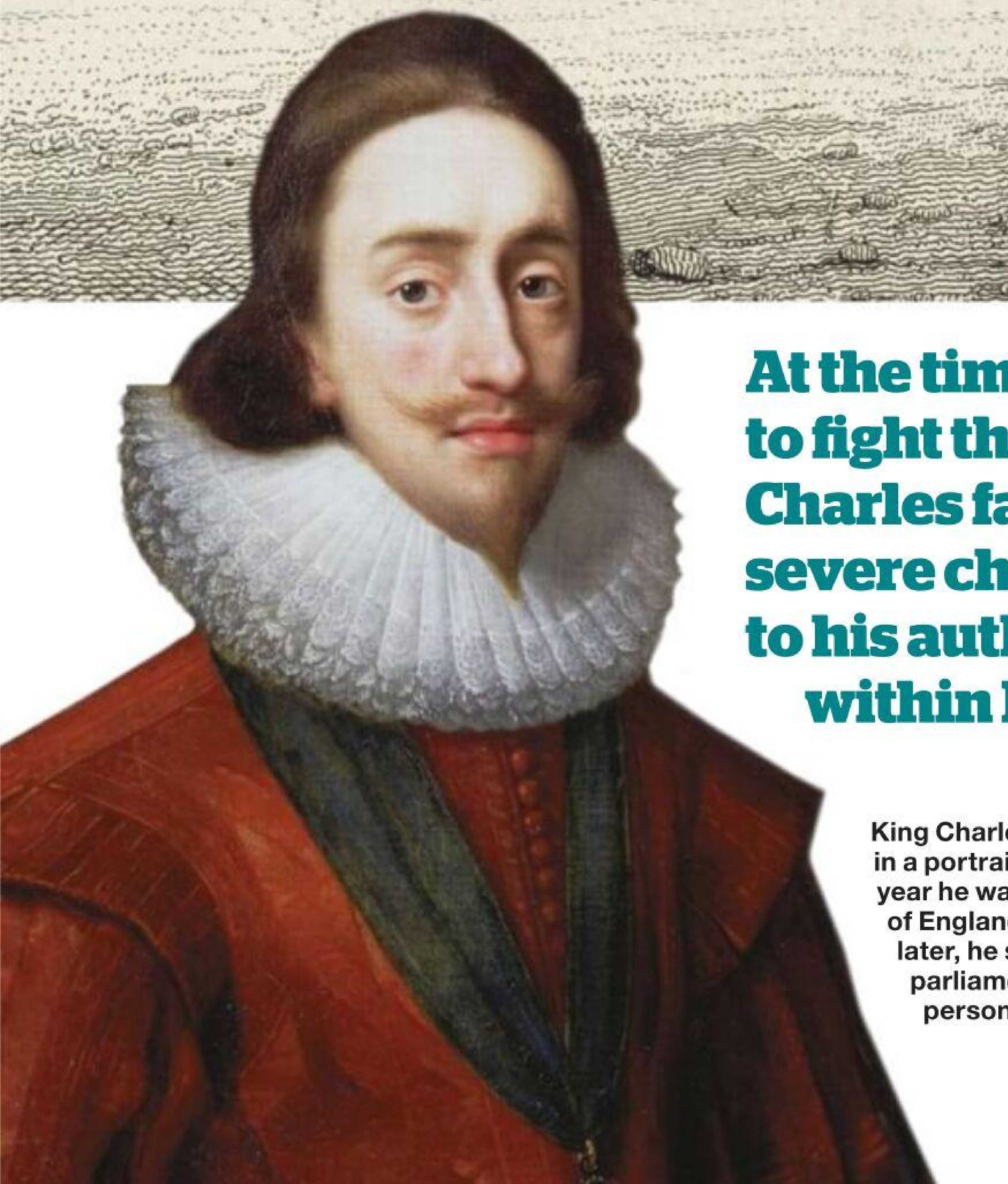
BRIDGEMAN

In August 1640, for the first time in over two centuries, England was defeated in war by the Scots, at the battle of Newburn, just west of Newcastle upon Tyne. For the vanquished King Charles I, that moment was the turning point in his entire reign. Behind him were 11 years when he had ruled without parliament, and when he seemed poised to create a monarchy as authoritarian as any in France or Spain. The Scottish victory put an end to that. By the autumn of 1640, Charles faced the almost complete collapse of his ability to rule. The Scots occupied the northern counties of England as far south as Yorkshire. The exchequer was empty. Royal credit was exhausted. And Charles, with great reluctance, was forced to call a parliament to deal with the financial consequences of defeat.

Few parliaments were to have such momentous consequences. Instead of healing the nation's divisions, it widened them. Within two years of the parliament's meeting in November 1640, a major rebellion against English rule had broken out in Ireland, and England had descended into civil war. Ahead lay almost a decade of armed conflict and social disruption, punctuated – but not actually ended – by the king's own trial and execution as a 'tyrant' in 1649.

How, then, had that decisive defeat in 1640 come about? Of course, the traditional answer is that it was the invasion by the Scots that was the source of all Charles's woes. Without that, his 'Personal Rule'



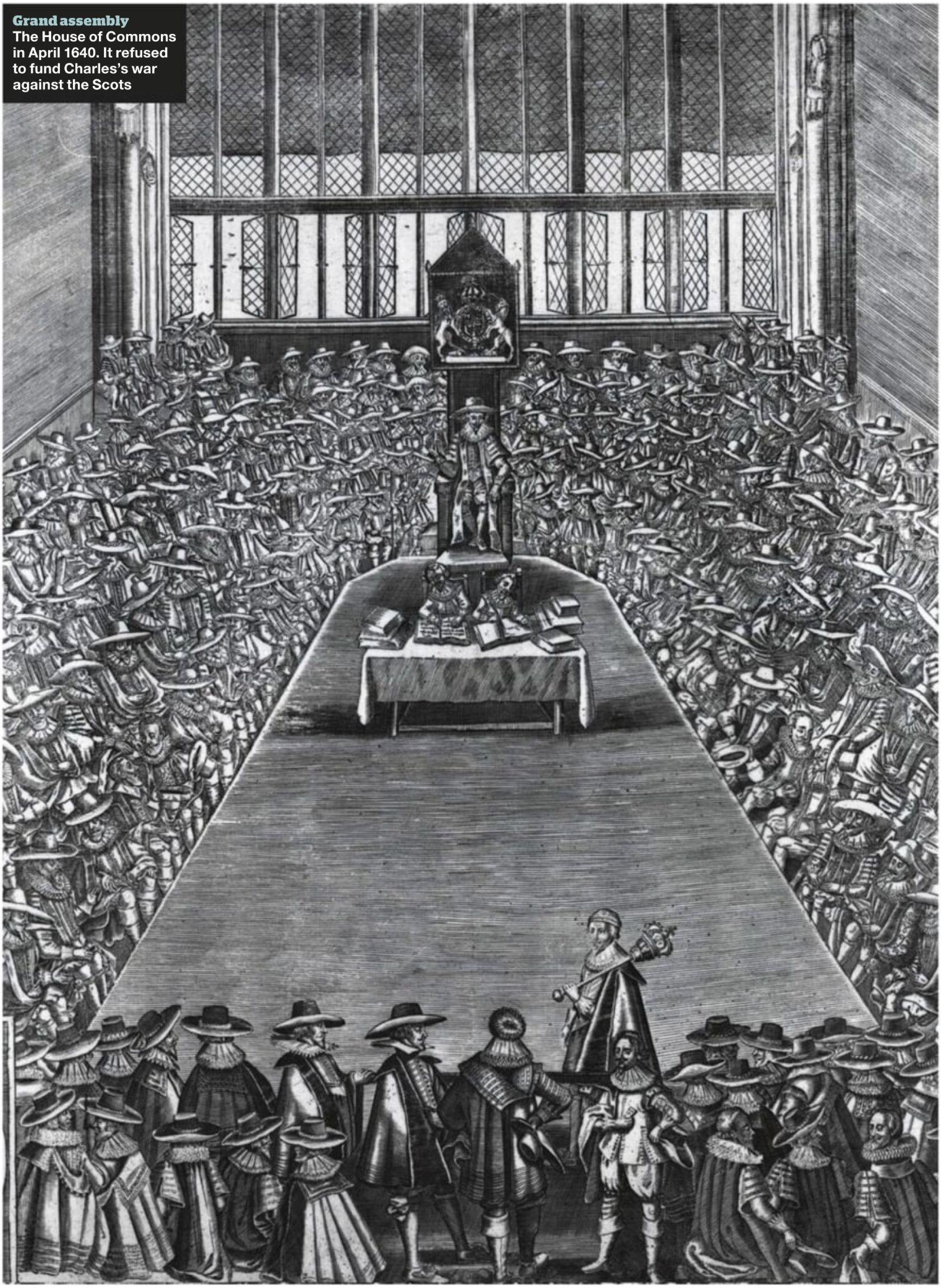


King Charles I, depicted in a portrait of c1625, the year he was crowned King of England. Four years later, he suspended parliament and imposed personal rule

might well have survived, and parliaments might have become as defunct in England as their institutional cousins had in France and Spain.

Yet there is a key element to that crisis of the summer of 1640 that has largely gone unnoticed. Because, at the time he went off to fight the Scots, Charles also faced a severe challenge to his authority within England: a threat so menacing that in the September of 1640, the Privy Council – the king's senior group of advisers – was making plans to withdraw itself and the royal family to Portsmouth, in the expectation of a collapse of monarchical authority in the south of England. From Portsmouth, the leading members of the government intended to evacuate to north Wales, where they would rally

At the time he went to fight the Scots, Charles faced a severe challenge to his authority within England



Grand assembly
The House of Commons in April 1640. It refused to fund Charles's war against the Scots

BRIDGEMAN

an army in the hope of fighting their way back to London.

Indeed, in September 1640 the Privy Council believed that it faced a full-scale aristocratic revolt – one so perilous that, in the words of the secretary of state, it posed "the greatest [danger]... since the [Norman] Conquest". Nor were these merely illusory fears. In the summer of 1640 there was, in fact, a highly organised conspiracy against Charles's rule.

The government's suspicions of this conspiracy went back at least to the spring of that year, when it intercepted correspondence proving that a small "knot" of peers and Commons-men were in communication with the Scottish rebels, and deliberately sabotaging the king's parliamentary attempts to fund his forthcoming campaign. For once, these suspicions were not merely the government's paranoia. At its heart was a clique of puritan grandees – among them the Earls of Warwick and Essex, and Lords Saye and Brooke – who had been critics of the king's policies since the start of his reign. What made their conspiracy so dangerous by the summer of 1640 was that it had spread to the court, and included a number of sympathisers who occupied major offices of state.

They were driven by a complex amalgam of motives: partly religious, provoked by hatred of the 'popish' innovations Charles and his bishops had introduced into the church; partly legal, moved by alarm at the king's erosion of his subjects' traditional rights of property and what they believed to be his disdain for the rule of law; and partly also a matter of noble honour, outraged by the king's indifference to the advice of the "ancient nobility" and his promotion of social parvenus.

By the summer of 1640, however, they were united by one common ambition: the desire to topple the existing regime and to redefine permanently the powers of the crown. To achieve this, the conspirators had entered into direct negotiations with the rebel leadership in Scotland, and were preparing themselves, if necessary, to fight what they believed would be a short and decisive civil war.

Baronial revolt

What the Scots wanted from these noble dissidents was, in fact, an old-fashioned baronial revolt. They requested that their English allies meet them with "Horse and Foot, and Men, and Money, and Credit" the moment the Scottish army crossed the border into England in the summer of 1640. But their English allies found this proposal neither prudent nor, perhaps, even practicable. Apart from any other difficulties it created, it would have allowed the king to denounce the Scots' English allies as traitors.

Instead, they offered a subtler and more devious strategy. Rather than put on their armour and join the Scottish army in the north of England, they could undermine Charles far more effectively, they insisted, and assist the Scots just as powerfully, if they appeared to act independently, organising resistance from London. This resistance was to take two forms. Plan A was to appeal to public opinion: instead of attacking the king's army, they planned to make it politically undeployable by organising a nationwide petitioning campaign, calling for an end to the conflict and demanding the summons of a new parliament to begin the great business of reform.

But there was also a Plan B, to be implemented if Charles refused to call a parliament and insisted on pressing on with the war, and this plan was much closer to what the Scots originally had in mind. Bedford, Warwick and Essex offered to raise forces of their own, partly by suborning officers in the king's army, and partly by recruiting in London, where they had close links with one of the capital's private militias, the City Artillery Company – where, it was claimed, a subversive creed "was instill'd into [its members] that the blessed Reformation… could not be effected but by the sword". Nor was this an idle boast. By early September 1640, they claimed to have won the support of the commanding officers of nine regiments in the king's army who were prepared to change sides in the event that Plan B – a military rebellion against the king – needed to be put into action.

In the summer of 1640, the key to the whole strategy was speed: if the Scots' army could invade England and race south as far as Newcastle – the strategically vital port that controlled the coal supply to London – before the king's main field army arrived to reinforce it, there was a strong possibility that the king could be defeated without a shot being fired. This would be the point at which the dissident peers – the "lords of the South", as they became known – would issue their threat, if necessary, to summon parliament on their own authority.

The Scots were as good as their word. Entering England on 17 August 1640, they reached the Tyne 10 days later, defeated a small English force sent to halt their advance at the battle of Newburn, and took possession of Newcastle the following day. This was a major setback to the king and his commander, the Earl of Strafford, but it was not enough to bring down his regime. He still had an army around 17,000 strong at York: enough to besiege and retake Newcastle, or to force the Scots to a pitched battle.

Bells were rung in London churches to celebrate the Scottish victory at Newburn, and there were bonfires in the streets

Second front

However, it was in London – the second front in the war of 1640 – that an equally dangerous attack on the king's authority seemed imminent. The Privy Council had been worried by the presence of a large number of the known dissident nobles in town since the end of August. But when news arrived of the Scots' victory over the English army at Newburn, the capital seemed to the Privy Council to be on the brink of open revolt. On the night the news arrived, bells were rung in the London churches to celebrate the Scottish victory and there were bonfires in the streets.

In the week that followed, Warwick and his fellow conspirators made ready to implement Plan B: a military insurrection against the king in the event of his continuing the war against the Scots. As London openly celebrated the king's defeat, the dissident lords turned the City Artillery Company's annual muster into a partisan demonstration of support for an English revolt. The call to arms came first from the pulpit, in a remarkable sermon preached to the Artillery Company on 1 September by Calybute Downinge, protege of one of the rebel peers. Basing his argument on a mixture of biblical precedent and resistance theories devised during the years of the Dutch revolt against Spanish rule, Downinge argued powerfully for the legitimacy of an armed insurrection against the king's current "evil counsellors". In a sure and grave crisis, Downinge asserted, the usual laws concerning non-resistance cease to apply – and such was the crisis of the moment.

In the week following the sermon, the rebel lords of the south got down to putting these principles into practice. First, they declared their hand, with 12 of the leading noblemen-conspirators sending a petition to the king (which they subsequently published) demanding an end to the war and the summons of a new parliament. It contained the implied threat that if Charles refused their demands, they would resort to other, potentially violent, means.

For the king, what was more alarming still about this challenge to royal authority was that it provided the cue for a carefully orchestrated series of further petitions – from the Scots, Londoners, the city clergy, and from a number of counties where the aristocratic rebels had influence – to be published, all backing the demands of the petitioning peers.

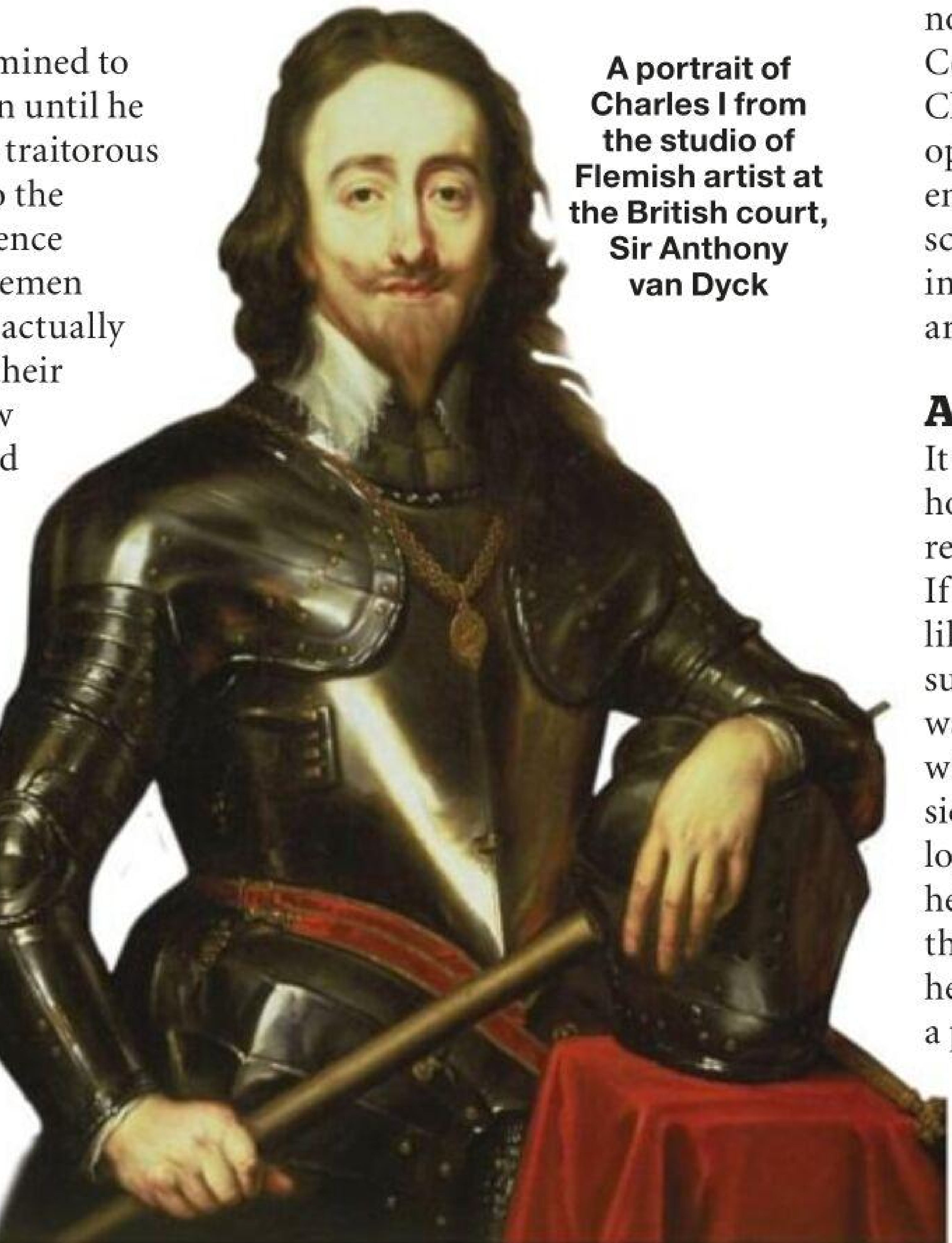
Among these county petitions were several from the Yorkshire nobility and gentry – a particularly dangerous development, because Yorkshire was the front-line county in the war against the Scots. Yorkshire militia regiments constituted over a quarter of Charles's entire army. If these changed sides, or refused to fight, the war was as good as lost. Little wonder that Charles flew into a fury at the Yorkshire petitioners, and threatened to have two of the ringleaders hanged as traitors. In the event he was deterred, but only because he was warned that the executions would provoke his own army to mutiny.

A new force

Even so, the king remained determined to refuse a parliament and to fight on until he drove the Scots – and any of their traitorous allies – either out of England or to the gallows. And it was this intransigence that confirmed the dissident noblemen in the conviction that they might actually have to call a new parliament on their own authority and defend the new assembly with force. They planned accordingly. Together with the Scots, they organised a new military force that was to fight under the name of the "Armies of the Commonwealth", composed jointly of the Scots army, regiments in the king's army that were prepared to change sides, and forces raised in London. They urged the Scots to have a crack force of cavalry that could move south to London at short notice, in case there were any attempt by the king to arrest them. And they sent two of their number, the Earls of Bedford and Hertford, to confront the Privy Council, giving them an ultimatum that the council should join them in demanding a new parliament, or they would not hold themselves accountable for the consequences.

The rebel lords appeared at York en masse, riding as a posse in a scene that might not have been out of place in a Western

The Privy Council's response to these initiatives was one of panic. From York, the king upbraided them: "I see you are all so frighted you can resolve on nothing." But the council's fears were justified. London was already close to being ungovernable. Requests that the city prevent the circulation of petitions backing the peers' manifesto were ignored. Many of the county lords lieutenant – the officers in charge of the local militias – looked likely to go over to the rebel army. The Essex militia, commanded by Warwick, was particularly suspect – but the Council's orders that it should be disbanded were simply disregarded.



A portrait of Charles I from the studio of Flemish artist at the British court, Sir Anthony van Dyck

BRIDGEMAN

With its instructions being widely spurned, the Privy Council, by the first week of September, was organising its response to the total collapse of royal authority in southern England – hence the planned withdrawal of government to Portsmouth, and then on to north Wales, where the king could rendezvous with the Earl of Worcester, a great Catholic magnate who had both the money and the manpower required for a royalist fight-back.

Charles's riposte to this challenge to his authority was to call the dissidents' bluff. To prove they were nothing more than a "factious" minority, Charles decided to summon a 'Great Council of Peers', a convention of the whole nobility where, he remained confident, the actions of the dissidents would be repudiated. The majority of the nobility would be proved loyal, he believed, and they would provide him with the credit he needed to fund the resumption of the war. Indeed, so confident was the king that he instructed his secretaries to begin the preparation of treason charges against the pro-Scottish rebels.

But the king's calculations were disastrously awry. In the three weeks between the council's summons and its meeting, the rebel lords of the south had won the battle for support in the nobility, and perhaps even within the nation at large. By the opening of the Great Council in York, more than a third of the English nobility had joined the rebels, and the loyalty of other nobles was clearly wavering. The Great Council had been intended as a rally of Charles's loyalists. Instead, on the eve of its opening, the rebel lords appeared at York en masse, riding into town as a posse in a scene that might not have been out of place in an American Western, daring the king to arrest them.

Acceding to demands

It was this internal revolt that brought home to the king that he could no longer resist the demands for a new parliament. If he continued to refuse, there was every likelihood that the rebel peers would summon one on their own authority. What was certain, however, was that a majority within the Great Council of Peers would side with the rebels rather than remain loyal to the monarch. If only to save face, he had no alternative but to announce, at the Great Council's opening meeting, that he had decided "of himself" to summon a parliament to meet at Westminster on

Charles I: a king under attack

1629

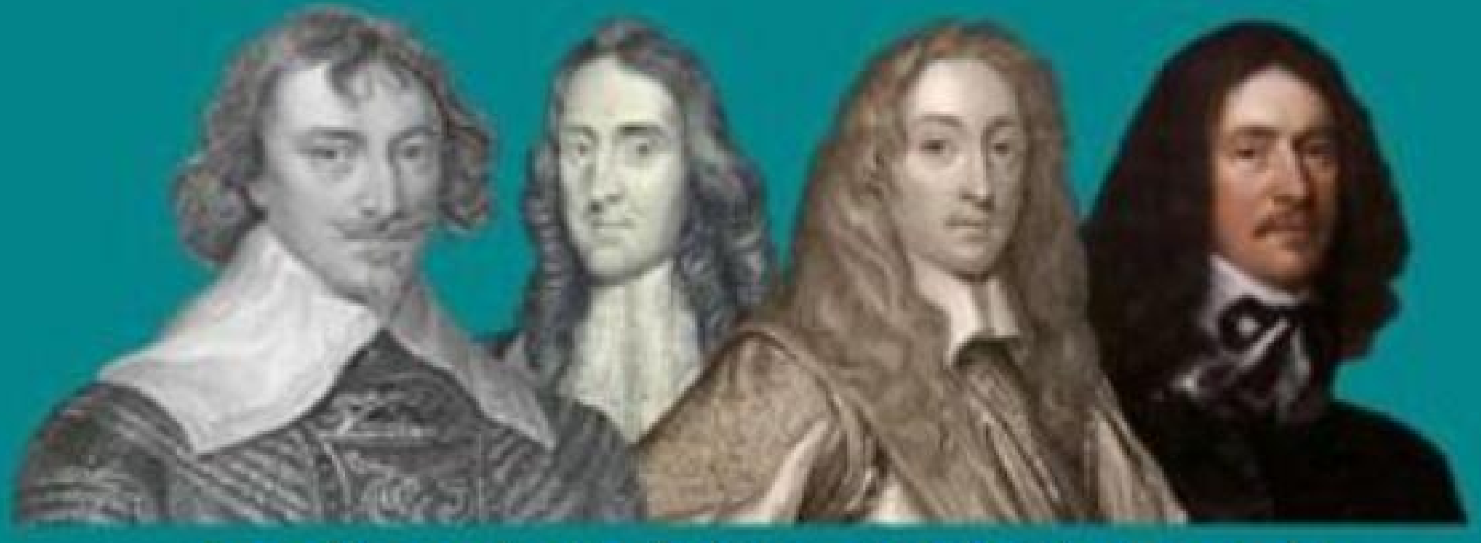
Charles I begins an extended period of 'Personal Rule', determined to make government in England financially independent of parliament

July 1637

Imposition on Scotland of a new prayer book, based on the English model, proves the flashpoint for organised revolt against Charles I's absentee rule

February 1638

Resistance in Scotland becomes a nationwide rebellion with the signing of the National Covenant, and moves towards the establishment of a provisional rebel government in Edinburgh



Leading rebels (left to right): the Earl of Warwick, Viscount Mandeville, Lord Brooke and his brother-in-law, Sir Arthur Hesilrige

May–June 1639

A first English military campaign is launched to invade Scotland and overthrow the rebel government. Both sides send armies into the field, but Charles declines a pitched battle, preferring to return with a larger army the following year, resulting in stalemate

February–May 1640

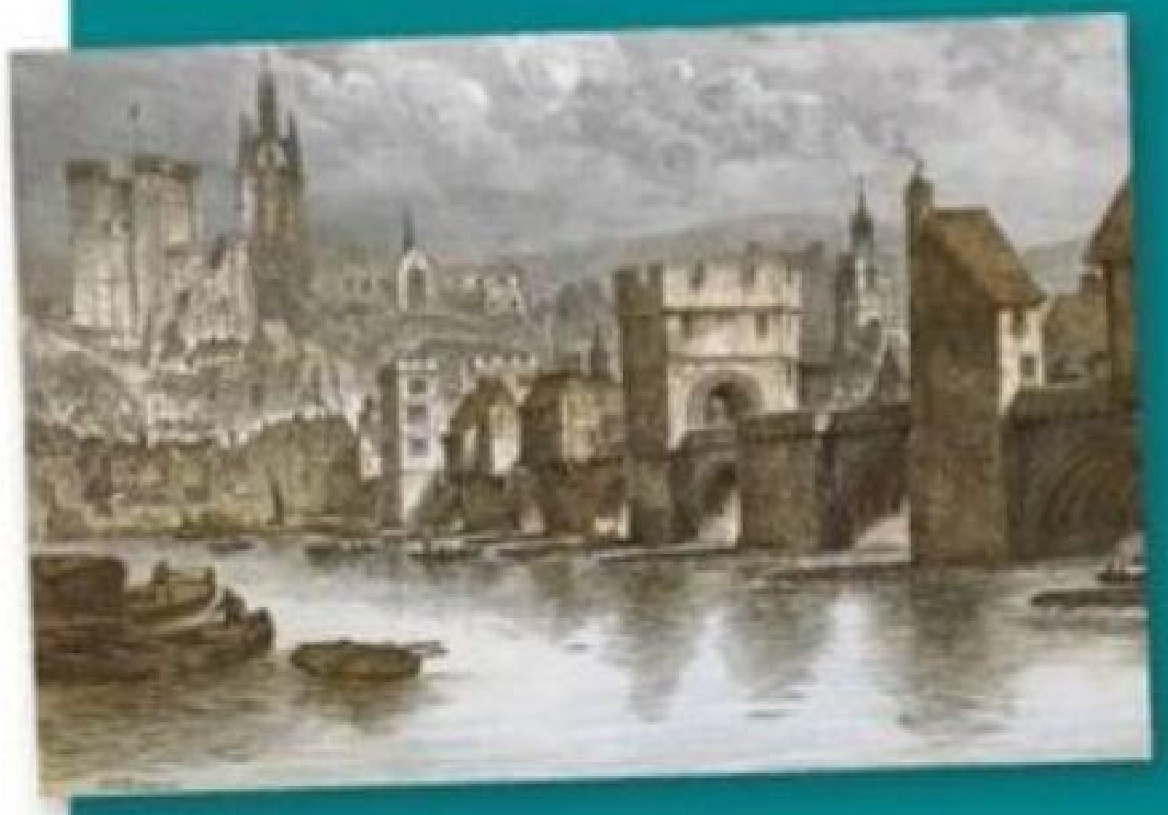
The Scottish rebels and English dissidents – including the Earl of Warwick, Viscount Mandeville, Lord Brooke, Sir John Clotworthy and John Pym – discuss coordinated resistance to Charles's government

13 April 1640

Charles meets his first English parliament in 11 years, seeking funding for a second campaign against the Scots. Parliament refuses to grant funds unless grievances are first redressed; it's dissolved on 5 May

May–June 1640

Second mobilisation for war against the Scots. The king relies on loans from Privy Councillors, subsidies from Ireland, and the promise (not kept) of Spanish financial aid



Newcastle upon Tyne, pictured here in the 17th century, was captured by the Scots in August 1640

20 August 1640

The Scottish army enters England and occupies Northumberland unopposed

28 August 1640

The Scottish army routs part of the king's forces at the battle of Newburn; nearby Newcastle then surrenders to the Scots. Dissident nobles call for the abandonment of the war against Scotland and the summons of a new parliament

24 September 1640

The Great Council of Peers meets in York. Charles capitulates to demands for a new parliament, and control of the new Treaty of Union between England and Scotland is conceded to the rebel peers

3 November 1640

The new parliament begins in Westminster. Supporters of the rebel 'Junto' achieve dominance of most major committees

August–September 1641

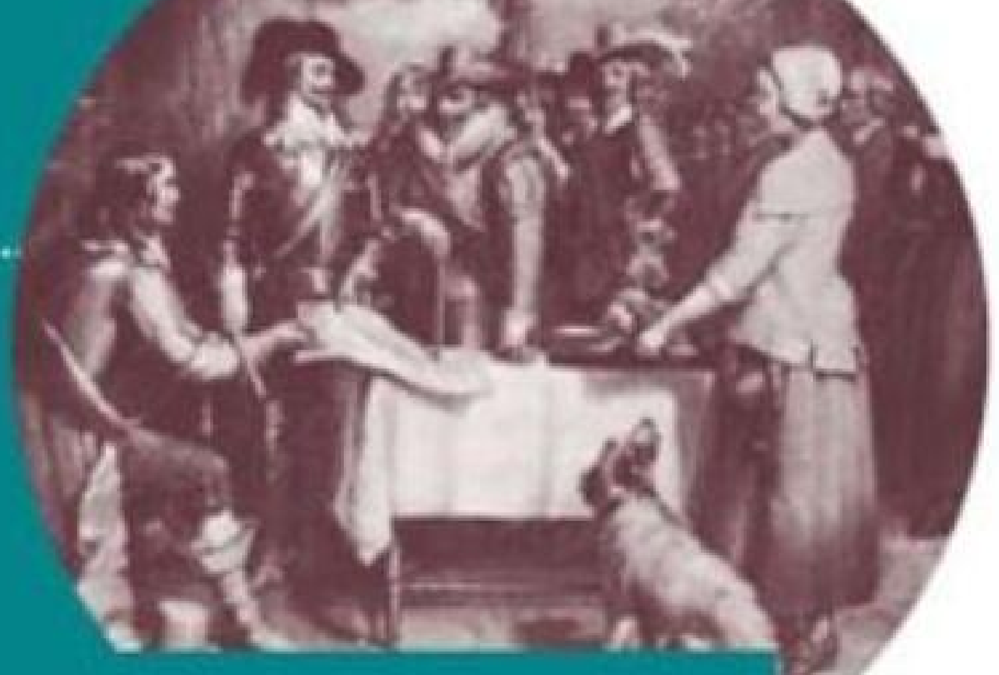
Ratification of the Treaty of London between the two 'commonwealths' of England and Scotland

May 1642

The Lords and Commons resolve that the king intends to make war against the parliament and that they must raise an army in its defence

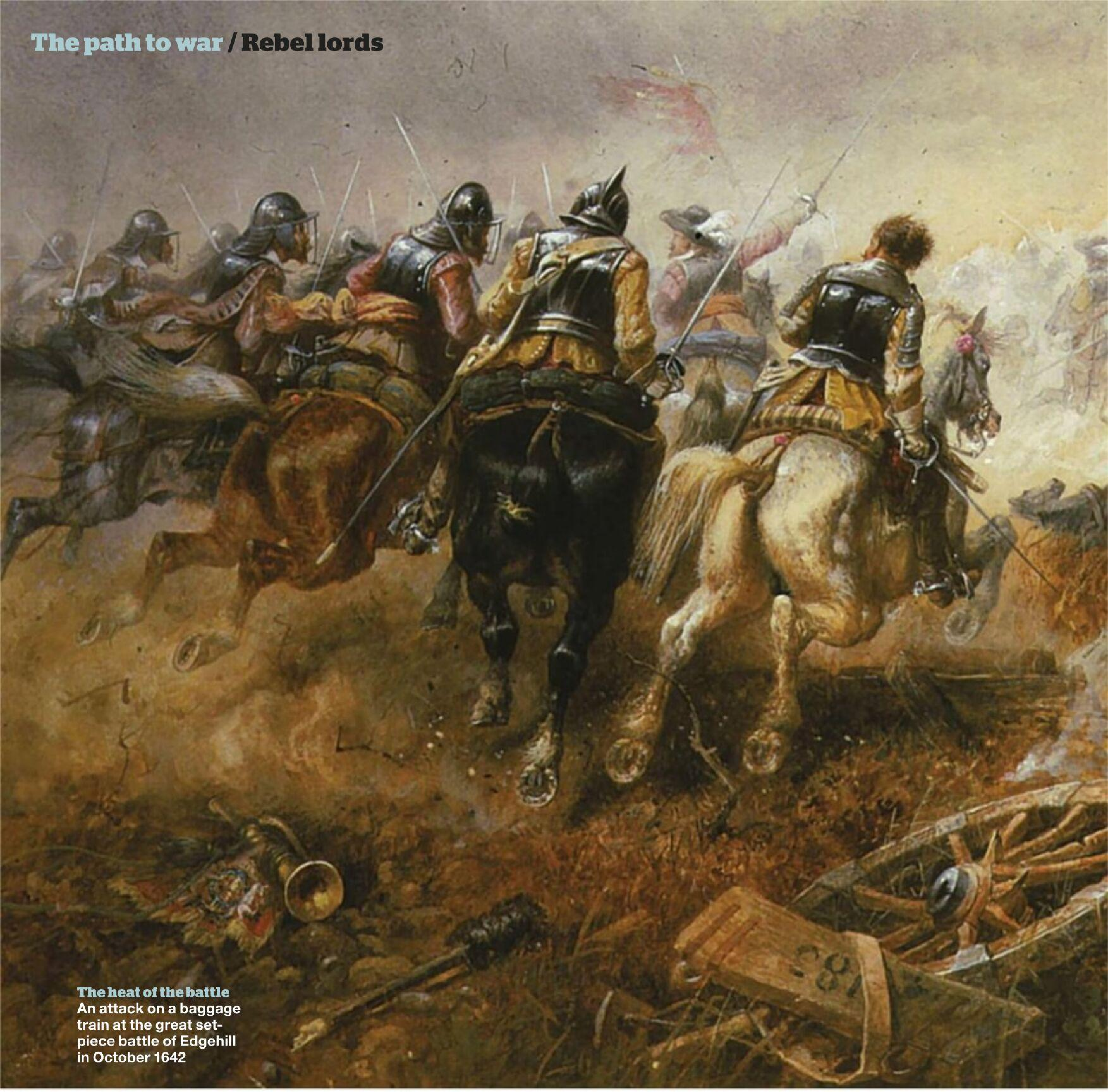
23 October 1642

The great set-piece battle, at Edgehill (Warwickshire), fails to produce a clear-cut winner; both sides prepare to an extended period of civil war



Charles I makes final preparations for war on the eve of the battle of Edgehill

BRIDGEMAN/GETTY



The heat of the battle
An attack on a baggage train at the great set-piece battle of Edgehill in October 1642

SHUTTERSTOCK

3 November 1640. But he recorded the names of the conspirators who had thus humiliated him, adding the ominous note: "It shall not be forgotten".

The success of the 'rebel lords' in this first revolt of autumn 1640 enabled them – with their Commons allies such as Sir Arthur Hesilrige, Oliver St John and John Pym – to dominate the new parliament for most of its opening session. Within a matter of months they had usurped many of the key functions of government that hitherto would have been the business of the Privy Council. Perhaps most importantly, in September 1640 they had won control of the new treaty negotiations that were to redefine a new union between England and Scotland, and over the following 11 months they worked with the very same Scots with whom they had conspired during the summer to redraft the constitutions of both British kingdoms.

Their achievement in the parliament's first year was formidable. By the summer of 1641, the reformist lords had acquired almost every major office in the kingdom –

The success of the rebel lords transformed the political structures and religious ethos of the British kingdoms

civil, military and ceremonial – and had reduced the king's power in the two British kingdoms to little more than that of a "Doge of Venice". But their very success, which had transformed the political structures and religious ethos of the kingdoms, provoked, in turn, a reaction against the godly oligarchy at Westminster – one that was ultimately as strong as any hostility aroused by Charles's 'Personal Rule'.

The story of this 'noble revolt' is one of the great untold tales of 17th-century England. It involves a thorough redefinition of the dramatis personae of this great tragedy: the abandonment of a cast list that was last devised in the late 19th century and its replacement with a list defined by the witness of contemporaries, whose voices emerge with often startling clarity from the dozens of new archives that have become available in the intervening hundred years. This testimony has far-reaching implications for our understanding of the origins and subsequent course of the Civil War. It is high time that it was heard. H

John Adamson is a fellow of Peterhouse at the University of Cambridge, specialising in early modern British and European cultural and political history

DISCOVER MORE

BOOK

▶ **The Noble Revolt: the Overthrow of Charles I** by John Adamson (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2009)

▶ **The English Civil War: Conflict and Contexts** edited by John Adamson (Palgrave, 2008)

Face of a tyrant?
Charles I, painted by Daniel Mytens in 1631. The ill-fated monarch has been characterised as weak and tyrannical but, Leanda de Lisle suggests, he was "a man of great courage, immense resilience and high principles who also had human flaws"

CHARLES I

NEITHER MARTYR NOR TRAITOR

The 'White King' is commonly painted as a high-handed man whose belief in the Divine Right of Kings and attempts to control Scottish religion sparked the Civil War. But as **Leanda de Lisle** explains, the truth is much more complex and intriguing

GETTY

Charles is pinned to the pages of history, preserved in popular memory like an exotic but desiccated insect

The sky was "serene and clear" as the coffin of Charles I was brought out of the hall at Windsor Castle. The coffin was borne by gentlemen in mourning, and four peers carried a black velvet pall. As they stepped forward, snow began to fall; by the time they reached St George's Chapel, where the king was to be interred, "the black velvet pall was all white" – the "colour of innocence", as one witness later described it, recalling that Charles had been crowned in white. "And so," that writer concluded, "went the white king to his grave".

This was fake history. The witness, Thomas Herbert, was a professional liar employed by parliament to spy on Charles in his captivity. He surely did not believe in Charles's innocence that day – if he ever did. The legend that Charles had been crowned in white was untrue, but much had been made of it. In labelling him the 'White King', Charles's opponents were evoking the prophecies of Merlin, which described a dreadful tyrant who was destined for a violent death. Conversely, the king's supporters claimed that Charles's white coronation robes had reflected his saintliness, and that he had died a martyr. When Herbert wrote his memoirs, during the reign of Charles II, it was politic to remember him that way. And the snow, like the white robes, melts into myth.

Today, the sobriquet of the White King, lauded by friends and condemned by enemies, is largely forgotten. But something just as extreme remains: Charles is pinned to the pages of history as a failed king, executed at the hands of his own subjects and preserved in popular memory like some exotic but desiccated insect. In many popular accounts, it seems, Charles was doomed from birth, his character immutable.

We like to believe that we have turned our back on old prejudices, but the way we remember Charles shows how they continue to influence the way we think. In the past, disabilities were seen as marks of humanity's fallen nature. The same shorthand is still used, and it is common for Charles's fate to be traced back to the physical difficulties of his childhood, as if his weak legs were physical manifestations of weakness of character. The resilience and determination he showed in overcoming his disability, emerging as an athletic prince, is surely more interesting.

Instead of a survivor, though, we are presented with the narrative of a sickly child maturing into an effete adult. Charles's youthful indiscretions with women go unremarked, and even his passion for art – shared by his militaristic elder brother Henry, who died young – is judged prissy rather than princely. There is little hint of the virility of a king who sired a large brood of children. Indeed, the happiness of Charles's marriage is grist to the mill.

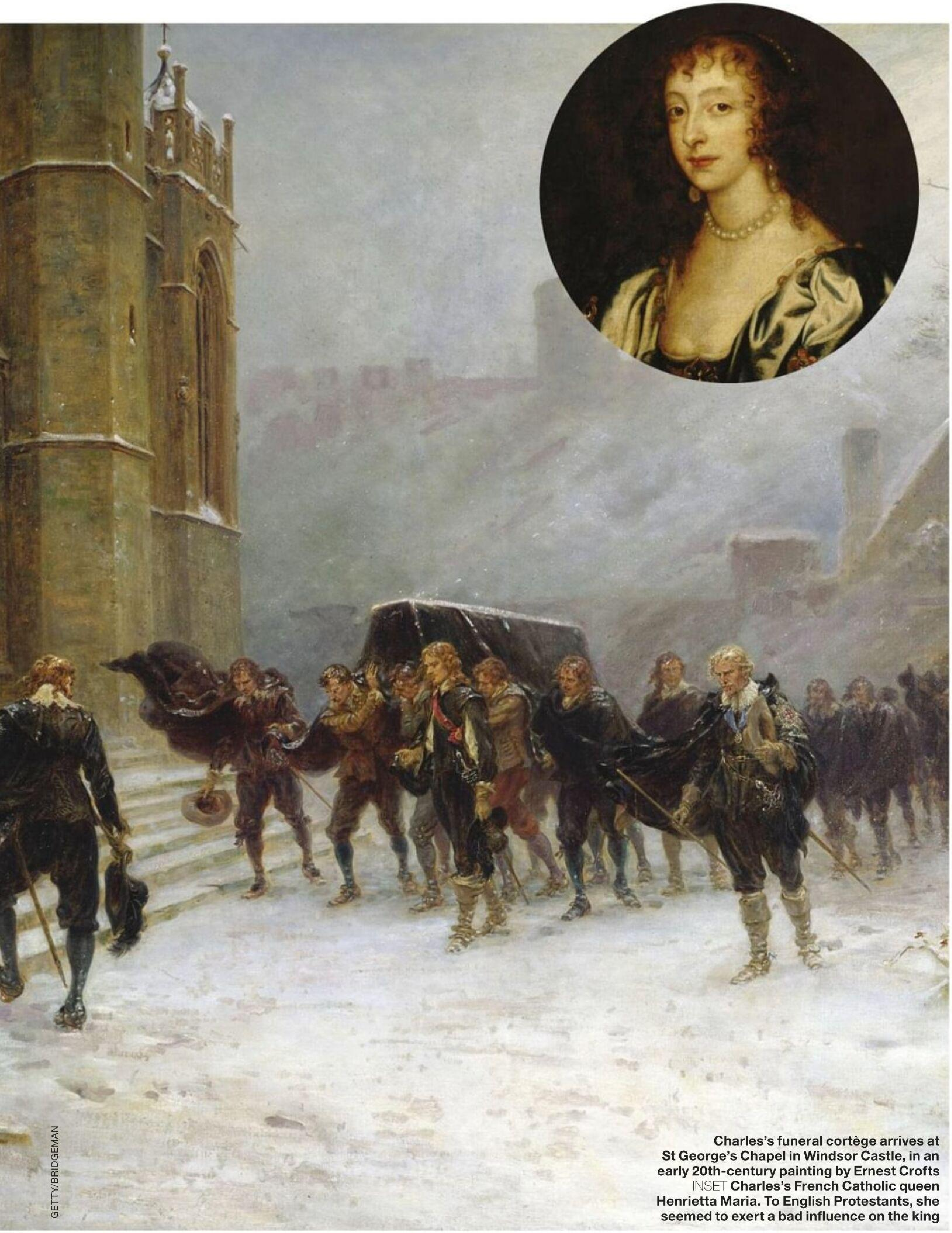
In the early modern period, 'effeminate' was not a term of abuse for homosexuals but described men who enjoyed female company. Strikingly, Charles is judged less than a man because he loved his wife, and her reputation in turn is itself shaped by old misogynistic attitudes. Since Eve, women have been accused of seducing men into evil. So it was with Charles, whose Catholic queen, Henrietta Maria, supposedly persuaded him to become a Euro-Catholic tyrant in Protestant, parliamentary Britain, setting him on the path to ruin.

Questions of faith and power

This traditional view of Charles covers the tracks of those who shared responsibility for the horrors of the Civil War. It also inspires indifference to the period. Despite the wealth of exciting new scholarship, and the thrilling story of the king's life, the well-trodden ground of the Tudors continues to grab more attention. Yet the drama of the Tudor age did not end with the death of Elizabeth I. As Charles ascended to the throne, questions raised during the Tudor era about faith and power awaited their bloody resolution.

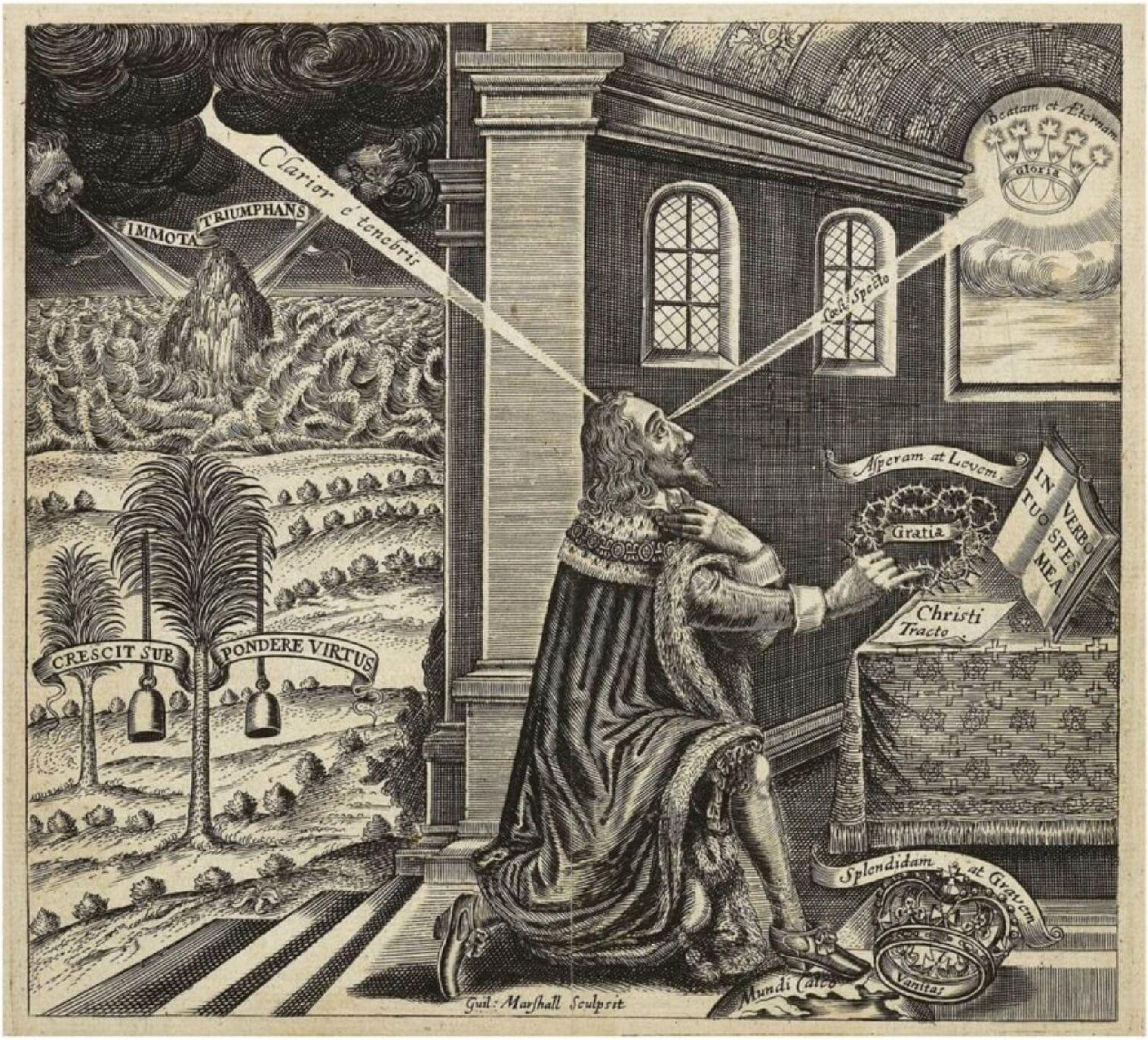
The Church of England, with its episcopate (rule by bishops), remained only half reformed. Though Charles thought it "the best in the world", for Puritans, its combination of Calvinist theology and Catholic structure was a dangerous "mingle mangle of the Popish government with pure doctrine".

Calvinists feared their faith was fragile in Britain. In Europe, the Counter-Reformation was triumphing in the hugely destructive Thirty Years' War, which evolved from a Protestant rebellion against the Catholic Holy Roman Emperor, while



Charles's funeral cortège arrives at St George's Chapel in Windsor Castle, in an early 20th-century painting by Ernest Crofts INSET Charles's French Catholic queen Henrietta Maria. To English Protestants, she seemed to exert a bad influence on the king

GETTY/BRIDGEMAN



An illustration from the *Eikon Basilike*, subtitled 'The Pourtraicture of His Sacred Majestie in His Solitudes and Sufferings', a purportedly autobiographical work published just after Charles's death that painted him as a martyr

BRIDGEMAN

in England Protestantism had already proved vulnerable to the whims of Tudor monarchs. To defend themselves during the reign of the Catholic Mary I, Protestants had developed 'resistance' theories. These argued that kings took their authority from the people, who therefore had the right to overthrow (or indeed kill) any monarch of the 'wrong' religion – and for Calvinists this included the 'wrong' kind of Protestantism.

Charles's father, King James VI and I, had confronted this religious justification for terror by arguing that kings, like bishops, drew their authority from God, that they ruled by divine right, and that only God could punish them – lessons in power that Charles had embraced.

Man of action

Charles's first years as king revealed a man of energy and action. He took his kingdoms into the Thirty Years' War, fighting for Stuart dynastic interests and the Protestant cause. He also began to put his stamp on his kingdoms. His was a cinematic imagination, and he used a theatre of ceremony, ritual and beauty to shape a socially deferential and hierarchical society appropriate to divine right monarchy.

In English churches, parishioners witnessed a move away from a Calvinist focus on sermons and extempore prayers in plain buildings to a new style of protestant worship with ritual and ceremony set in churches adorned with religious imagery. Some liked this change, but others believed that it threatened the Church of England's Calvinist traditions. Meanwhile, successive military failures saw the fear of Counter-Reformation triumph become more acute. When parliament failed to provide Charles with the taxes he needed to wage war, and instead attempted to impeach his leading minister, the Duke of Buckingham, he extended his royal power in order to raise money by other means. This threatened to make parliament redundant, ramping up the sense of national peril.

Charles accepted that there were great benefits to working with his MPs but, like his Scots father, James, he never fully appreciated parliament's significance to the English people. Nor was he able to overcome his instincts and invest more trust in his MPs and in his own power to control and intimidate them. He never really accepted the compromises and slights to his regal authority that the messy business of politics sometimes required.

Charles was, in his private life, "the best master, the best friend, the best husband, the best father": loving and loved. Yet he distrusted appeals to the emotions. He had absorbed his father's lessons concerning the dangers of 'populism' (by which James meant rabble-rousing), and also had no instinct for it. He found people difficult to read, and his inability to interpret their actions and feelings often left him angry and frustrated. Form and order mediated relationships in a way with which he was comfortable. Equally, any challenge to form and order felt extremely threatening.

Charles believed that the war abroad had opened up a new front at home, where he faced enemies who were less anxious to do their duty to their country and king than to dictate royal policy. He felt that they manipulated public opinion, and that their narrow interpretation of Protestantism only encouraged their sedition and demagogy.

In 1628, Buckingham was assassinated. The following year, the breakdown in trust between king and MPs saw the beginning of 11 years of Charles's personal rule without parliament. In contrast to the reigns of the Tudors, there were no political or religious executions during this period. Indeed, in the view of some of his supporters, the so-called "eleven years' tyranny" was not nearly tyrannical enough. Though Charles was self-righteous, he was rarely ruthless. This emboldened his enemies, and they proved more willing than he was to shed blood.

In 1640, a knot of disaffected peers and their allies, led by England's foremost buccaneer Robert Rich, Earl of Warwick, and the prominent MP John Pym, plotted an invasion of England in treasonous alliance with Scots rebels who had opposed the imposition of a new prayer book and were now determined to abolish episcopacy. The Scots' victory and occupation of the north forced Charles to call what became known as the Long Parliament in in order to raise the money needed to pay the Scots to withdraw. The Long Parliament also gave a platform to Charles's enemies.

His life inspires the sympathy of tragedy, and when he died he was loved in a way that his cynical, merry son would never be

In the past, the opposition had wanted to protect and promote English Calvinism and the 'liberties of the subject', expressed in the free debates of parliament. Now, however, leaders such as Warwick and Pym were anxious to divest Charles of any powers that might later enable him to revenge himself on them for their treason with the Scots. They would also remove any minister capable of opposing them.

Charles's leading hardman, the Earl of Strafford, who had threatened to use an Irish army against the Scots, was arrested shortly after parliament assembled on trumped-up charges of treason, and was executed in 1641 without conviction at trial. Meanwhile, the opposition was also whipping up ethnic and religious hatreds to create a climate of fear that would help justify their increasingly radical moves. English Catholics were accused of storing weapons, and their priests were executed, to create an illusion of immediate threat, while targeted mob violence and mass petitions were used to intimidate English MPs to push through the legislation that the Warwick-Pym group wanted. Rebellion in Ireland helped to raise fears still further, as exaggerated reports spread of the massacres of Protestants.

New media

By 1642, the new media of pamphlets and newssheets, together with sermons and political speeches, had built a narrative that would justify rebellion as a necessary defence against 'popery' – a term that described a form of religious and political tyranny associated with the Counter-Reformation but which could be applied to any reverse to Calvinism – and Henrietta Maria was being pilloried as the papist-in-chief.

In fact, Charles despised the pope, and there were too few Catholics in Britain to pose any threat to the nation. The Civil War instead set Protestant against Protestant, fighting over the nature of the Church of England and where exactly the balance of power between king and parliament should lie. The radicalism pursued by men such as Warwick and Pym was as responsible for the Civil War as anything Charles had done. With Charles having now accepted that he could no longer rule without parliament, many MPs would fight for the king's cause against those they judged to be an ambitious clique allied to extremists and fanatics.

Most people expected the war to end with one great battle that the king would lose. But Charles was changing, and began to show new skills of leadership. Parliament had control of London and the majority of England's wealth and population. For a time, it also had the backing of the Scots. Nevertheless, it took four years for parliament to defeat Charles militarily. "He was very fearless in his person" – wrote Edward Hyde, Earl of Clarendon – in battle, and he would show equal courage in the grindstone of captivity.

Imprisoned from 1646, Charles never gave up the struggle to get the best terms for his restoration as king. His final sticking points remained a refusal to betray his God, by denying episcopacy was divinely instituted, or his brothers in arms, by giving up his friends to punishment. Until the last day of his trial Charles hoped he could yet strike a deal, ruthlessly threatening a new war in Ireland to get it. That hope of a deal was disappointed, but he had also learned the power of print, and had helped prepare the *Eikon Basilike* (Royal Portrait), a purportedly autobiographical work of propaganda that gave his cause life after his death, with the king remembered as a martyr.

In reality, Charles had been neither a saint nor his wife's weak puppet, but a man of great courage, immense resilience and high principles who also had human flaws. His life inspires the sympathy of tragedy, and when he died he was loved in a way that his son, the cynical, merry Charles II, would never be.

His legacy is the Church of England, with its bishops and choral music, and which even in our secular age is an important part of English culture. But the intensely moving drama of the 'White King' also remains. A tale of misogyny, mass movements and a new media, of populist politicians and religious terror, of civil wars and the hopes of a different future, this is a story that speaks to our time.

Leanda de Lisle is a historian, journalist and author. Her new book, *White King: Charles I – Traitor, Murderer, Martyr*, is published by Chatto & Windus in January 2018

THE MAKING OF A **MILITARY GENIUS**

In just two years, Oliver Cromwell made the journey from little-known MP with no experience of armed combat to brilliant, battle-winning leader. **Martyn Bennett** reveals how a military novice became one of British history's greatest warriors

BRIDGEMAN/NATIONAL ARMY MUSEUM

Quick learner
Oliver Cromwell, portrayed in an oil-on-panel painting. “He had a particularly sharp mind,” says Martyn Bennett, “one that could quickly take in the nature of a landscape and the military opportunities that it provided”

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In the early evening of 2 July 1644, two powerful armies faced each other across an expanse of wild meadow eight miles west of York. On one side was gathered a royalist force led by King Charles I's German nephew, Prince Rupert, and the Marquis of Newcastle. On the other, occupying a ridge known as Bramham Hill, stood an allied army of parliamentarians and Scottish covenanters.

At about 7pm, with a storm approaching and light becoming poor, the royalists decided that there was no prospect of a battle that day, so they started to stack arms, find food and unsaddle horses. Yet just as they began to settle down for the night, their enemies struck.

On the western fringe of the battlefield, Lieutenant General Oliver Cromwell led three lines of horse regiments down from the hill towards the royalists camped on the low ground in front of them. The front line advanced at a trot, then a canter, a gallop and, finally, a charge. Each man was pressed up against his colleagues with his sword drawn, ready to smash into the enemy. Caught unprepared on rough ground, those royalists who had managed to mount their horses in hope of launching a counterattack were driven back.

As Cromwell introduced more men into the fight, the royalist right flank broke and began to flee. But not all of the royalists had such a bad experience. On the opposite flank Charles's supporters caused such chaos that the three parliamentarian commanders – Lord Fairfax and the earls of Manchester and Leven – fled, thinking the day was lost. However, so devastating was Cromwell's attack that these royalist advances were to no avail. Parliament had won a famous victory. "We never charged but we routed the enemy," he later wrote. "God made them as stubble to our swords."

Oliver Cromwell was well on his way to becoming the most powerful man in Britain and Ireland.

Remarkable journey

Oliver Cromwell's battle-winning intervention at Marston Moor was remarkable enough in itself. But what made it even more extraordinary was the fact that, just two years earlier, at the outbreak of the Civil War between the forces of parliament and the royalists, he was a little-known MP who had never taken up arms, let alone led men into battle. His journey from obscure country gentleman to great warrior is among the most remarkable in British military history.

Heavy metal
Lobster-tail helmets like this one were worn by soldiers in Cromwell's heavy cavalry, known as harquebusiers

IN CONTEXT

The countdown to Marston Moor

The first 15 years of King Charles I's reign were marked by growing disaffection across his kingdom at his religious policies – some Protestants feared that he intended to restore the Catholic faith to England – and his apparent determination to rule without recourse to parliament.

By the early 1640s, the gulf between the king's royalist supporters and his parliamentarian opponents had become a chasm, and conflict appeared inevitable.

When war broke out in August 1642, a broadly royalist north and west of England was ranged against a chiefly parliamentarian south and east.

In the early months of the war, neither side gained a decisive advantage, and the first pitched battle – at Edgehill in Warwickshire – proved inconclusive. But in 1643 the king, directing the royalist war effort from his base in Oxford, appeared to gain the upper hand, seizing Yorkshire and Bristol. Then, in the autumn of 1643, the tide turned again. The royalists were forced to raise the siege of Gloucester, and the Scots threw their weight behind the parliamentarian cause.

By the time two large armies lined up against one another at Marston Moor just outside York on 2 July 1644, the scene was set for Oliver Cromwell to make an intervention that would all but secure parliament the north of England.

That journey began when Cromwell became MP for the Cambridgeshire market town of Huntingdon in 1628. The 29-year-old entered parliament at a fraught, feverish moment in its history, when Charles I's relationship with his MPs was becoming increasingly strained. There's a great deal we don't know about Cromwell at this time, but it seems that he was alarmed by the Catholic drift of the king's religious policy, and repelled by the notion of Charles's personal rule (the king chose to govern without recourse to parliament). It's little surprise, then, that when war broke out between king and parliament in the summer of 1642, Cromwell was quick to join the parliamentarian cause, first under Lord Grey of Wark and then under the Earl of Manchester.

Cromwell began the war as a captain of horse, but it wasn't long before his sharpness of mind – one that could quickly take in the nature of a landscape and the military opportunities that it provided – had won his superiors' admiration, particularly during the Edgehill campaign of autumn 1642. At the start of 1643, with both sides seeking to promote proven soldiers to create regional officers, he was made a colonel.

As a captain of horse, Cromwell had raised 80 men and chosen officers from his extended family or social and religious connections. His men were harquebusiers – the only heavy cavalry on Civil War battlefields. Clad in a buff coat, a back and breastplate and a triple-barred lobster-tail helmet, each harquebusier was armed with a heavy, straight-bladed sword, a short musket or carbine and two pistols.

Now, as a colonel, Cromwell could turn his single troop of harquebusiers into a regiment by recruiting five more troops from scratch or by amalgamating them from elsewhere.

Self-help guides

Contemporary military manuals suggest that it took years to acquire the experience and skill to be a captain of horse, let alone a colonel. Yet Cromwell had managed it in a matter of months. But how? Part of the answer may lie in the very manuals that insisted that his meteoric rise wasn't possible.

The late 16th and early 17th centuries was a boom time for such military 'self-help' guides, which offered both personal and professional tracts on battlefield acumen. Military greenhorns such as Cromwell could learn rapidly from texts such as John Cruso's *Militarie Instructions for the Cavall'rie* (1632), William Barriff's *Military Discipline: or, the Yong Artillery Man* (1635) and the *Swedish*

NATIONAL ARMY MUSEUM

Cromwell's transformation from obscure country gentleman to great warrior is among the most remarkable in military history

Natural born leader Thomas Wyck's painting of Oliver Cromwell on horseback. "He demonstrated great care for his soldiers – troubling over their training, their pay and their wellbeing," says Martyn Bennett

BRIDGEMAN

Intelligencer, which gave accounts of large battles on the European continent.

If Cromwell did indeed read these manuals, then it soon began paying dividends. At a skirmish near Grantham in Lincolnshire in May 1643 – part of an ultimately vain attempt to capture or weaken the key royalist garrison at Newark, north-east of Nottingham – he used his learning to brilliant effect.

At one point in the engagement, Cromwell found himself being chased towards Grantham by a force of royalist horse and dragoons. But then, having held an on-field council with Captain John Hotham, he decided to turn on his pursuers, using the so-called Swedish method. The parliamentarian horse advanced on their enemies, steadily increasing their speed to a charge. All the while, Cromwell's front line was linked together, with each rider's right knee lodged behind the left knee of the rider to his right. This formed a solid wall of horseflesh and armoured trooper at the point of impact.

The royalists did not charge to meet Cromwell's troops, instead "standing firm to receive us", as Cromwell later wrote, possibly confident that their carbine and pistol fire would deflect the attackers and force them to swerve to the flanks. Their confidence was misplaced. "Our men charging fiercely upon them, by God's providence they were immediately routed, and ran all away," Cromwell later recalled. His men then chased the broken enemy, inflicting most casualties during the royalists' flight.

Under siege

Cromwell achieved similar success two months later while advancing towards Gainsborough, in an attempt to break a royalist siege of that Lincolnshire town. As the parliamentarian troops advanced along what is now the A156, they were met by several royalist horse regiments and dragoons or musketeers, led by Sir Charles Cavendish.

Cavendish's men were stationed on a plateau on top of what is now known as Foxby Hill, presenting Cromwell and General Sir John Meldrum with the prospect of launching an attack across steep and broken ground.

Such an attack would have been a risky move. Had Cromwell's men been forced back down the hill, they would have run into marshy ground near the river Trent. Undeterred, they went on the offensive anyway – with spectacular success.

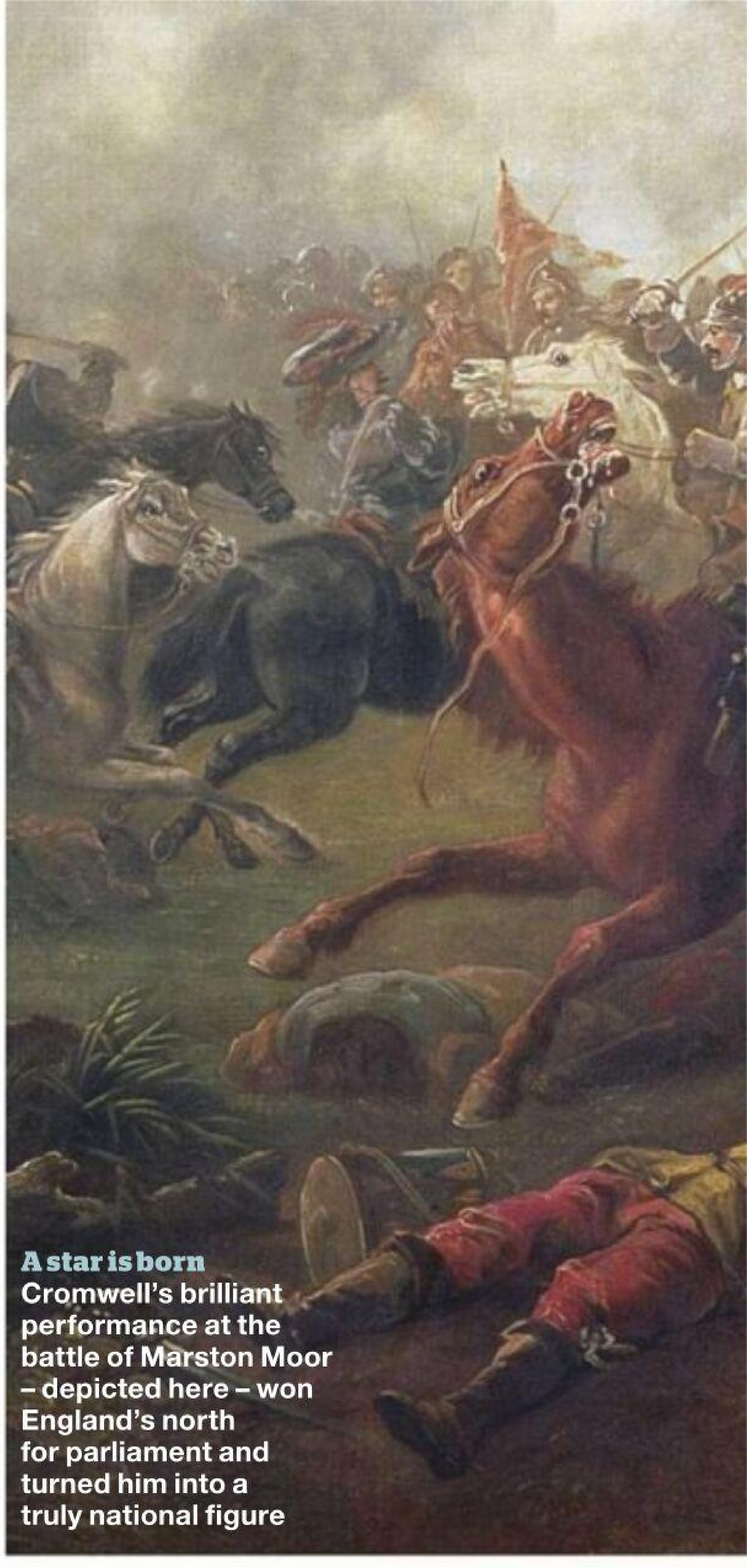
The royalists were unable to prevent Cromwell's men from cresting the hill. (We know from the fatal injury suffered by royalist John Hussey that the shooting was at close quarters.) Now, with both sides having formed a battle order on the plateau, they started to charge each other.

Cromwell's account noted that the fight was protracted before the royalists began falling back and breaking up. There then followed a fast pursuit, but Cromwell kept tight control of part of his regiment: "[I] kept back my major, Whaley, from the chase, and with my own troop and one other of my regiment, in all being three troops, we got into a body."

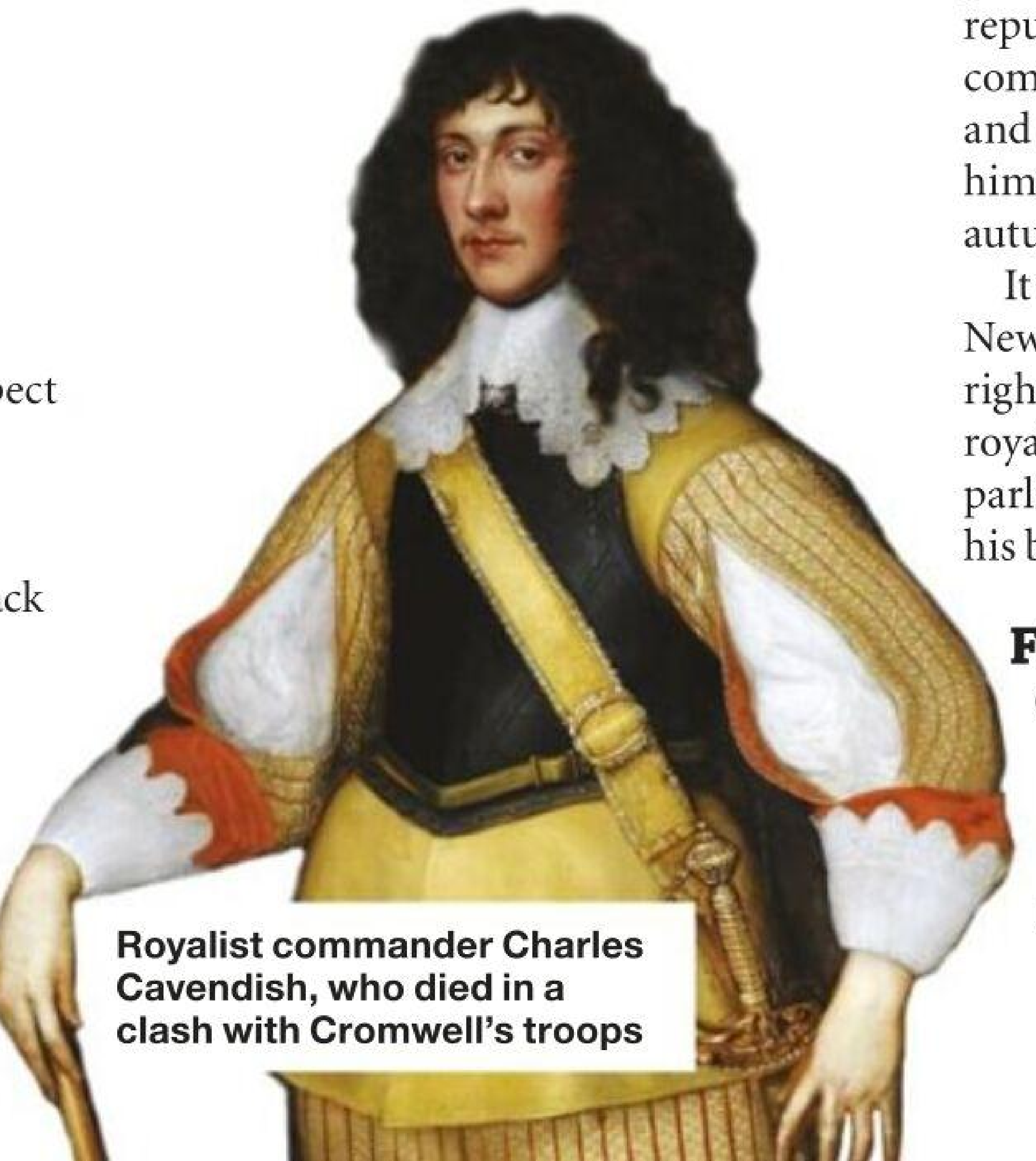
It was just as well he did because Cavendish, employing his own reserve, attacked the parliamentarian reserve and was meeting with some success – until Cromwell rammed into them from behind. The royalists were propelled into a headlong plunge down Foxby Hill across the nearby Lea Road into the marshes beyond, where they became literally bogged down. Cavendish himself was killed as he foundered in the wetlands.

These were only minor battles, and in no way changed the course of the Civil War. The parliamentarian retreat from Newark continued after the fight at Grantham, and Gainsborough fell to the royalists within hours of the clash on Foxby Hill. Yet in both engagements Cromwell demonstrated considerable foresight and ability. He understood the need to charge the enemy head-on, and to keep up the pressure after the initial clash. He also showed that, though a bloody close-quarter pursuit is of great value in wrecking an enemy force, keeping a reserve and simultaneously retaining tight control of front-line troops were equally important.

As well as being a brilliant tactician, Cromwell had a keen eye for strategy. Probably more than any other commander in the region, he recognised that possession of the royalist garrison at Newark was the key to regional control, and determined that those who worked with him were dedicated to the goal of capturing or at the very least neutralising it. He pressured superior commanders into taking a more aggressive line and, when they failed, he criticised them publicly. In doing so, he contributed to the reputational destruction of the Lincolnshire commander Lord Willoughby of Parham and eventually the Earl of Manchester himself, after he failed to tackle Newark in autumn 1644.



A star is born Cromwell's brilliant performance at the battle of Marston Moor – depicted here – won England's north for parliament and turned him into a truly national figure



Royalist commander Charles Cavendish, who died in a clash with Cromwell's troops

It was harsh – but Cromwell was right. Newark would act as a major bugbear right until the end of the war. While the royalist garrison there was active, no parliamentarian commander could turn his back on the area.

Fierce loyalty

Cromwell's tactical acumen, strategic foresight and gifts as a leader of men made him a truly formidable opponent. (He demonstrated great care for his soldiers – troubling over their

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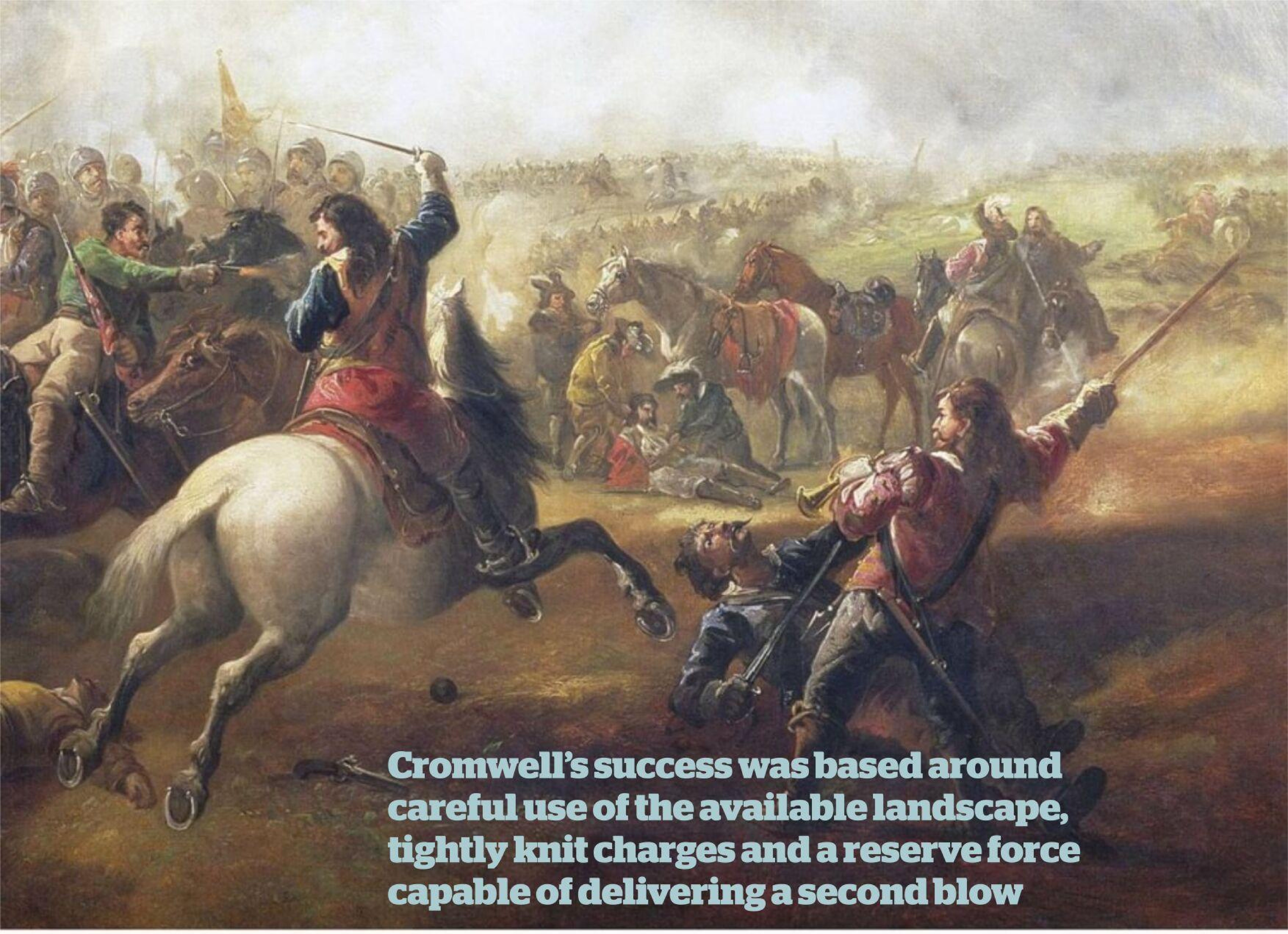


BRIDGEMAN

Cromwell's success was based around careful use of the available landscape, tightly knit charges and a reserve force capable of delivering a second blow

training, their pay and their wellbeing – and fought with administrators and paymasters on their behalf.) By the time he was appointed lieutenant general of horse under the Earl of Manchester in 1644, all he needed was experience of a major battle. Marston Moor would provide him with exactly that.

Early that summer, Manchester's Eastern Association army joined Lord Fairfax and the Earl of Leven in besieging the Marquis of Newcastle in York. When Prince Rupert dramatically rescued the marquis on 1 July, the three besieging armies withdrew towards the south-west before turning to face the pursuing royalists. When Cromwell and the Eastern Association horse arrived on the ridge of Bramham Hill, he saw that at the Tockwith end of what would be the battleground of Marston Moor, the royalists had begun to take possession of ground from which they could gain the upper hand over any force that positioned itself on the ridge.

Despite facing artillery and horse regiments, Cromwell attacked and forced the royalists back onto the lower ground of the moor. At one stroke, he had ensured not only that the ridge's western end was secure but also that the royalists were at a disadvantage, confined as they now were to the lower ground. He also effectively defined the western end of the battlefield as abutting two tracks, one running north from the Tockwith to Long Marston road, the other running south from it to Bilton. From here, Cromwell and the Scottish cavalry officer David Leslie led the allied army's charge on the royalists' right flank – an attack so devastating that it offset any success the royalists had achieved on the battlefield.

Cromwell's intervention cost Rupert and Newcastle the battle. More crucially, it forced King Charles to effectively abandon the north of England.

Cromwell's brilliance at Grantham and Gainsborough had forged him a formidable reputation – but on a regional level. The battle at Marston Moor changed all that. Now he was a national player – one hailed by 17th-century soldier and author Lionel Watson as "the great agent in this victory".

At Marston Moor, Cromwell built on the lessons of Grantham and Gainsborough. His success was based around careful use of the available landscape, tightly knit charges, a reserve force capable of delivering a second blow, and a front line able to remain in tight order even after hard-won victories.

Oliver Cromwell would go on to even greater heights over the following years – most notably in the spectacular Worcester campaign of 1651. But it was the military nous honed on the battlefields of the east Midlands that set him on a trajectory to becoming Britain's most brilliant general.

Martyn Bennett is professor of early modern history at Nottingham Trent University, and author of *Cromwell at War: The Lord General and His Military Revolution* (IB Tauris, 2017)

DISCOVER MORE

BOOK

▶ **Old Ironsides: The Military Biography of Oliver Cromwell** by Frank Kitson (Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 2004)

VISIT

▶ **The National Civil War Centre**, Newark *nationalcivilwarcentre.com*

ONLINE

▶ To learn more about **Oliver Cromwell**, read the BBC iWonder piece at *bbc.co.uk/timelines/zttpsbk*

THE WAR OF BLOOD

John Morrill visits eight places associated with encounters across England, Scotland and Ireland between 1638–51

The site of the battle of Marston Moor, where parliament triumphed in July 1644

1 Marston Moor, near York

YORKSHIRE

Where up to 50,000 men contested one of Britain's largest battles

The parliamentary victory at Marston Moor on 2 July 1644 was one of the major turning points in the Civil War in England, and also its biggest battle. Three parliamentarian armies – Fairfax's northern army, men from Scotland, and cavalry from East Anglia under Cromwell – fought head to head with the two major royalist armies under the Marquess of Newcastle and Prince Rupert.

Although it is difficult to confirm numbers, many historians believe that there could have been as many as 50,000 men on the battlefield, making it one of the largest battles ever to be fought on British soil. The clash was significant for a number of reasons, not least because it decided the fate of the city of York and control of the north, and saw Prince Rupert facing his biggest defeat, tipping the scales of war in favour of the parliamentarians.

The fields and moorland where the battle took place have remained relatively unchanged since 1644, making it a particularly evocative place to visit. The road between the villages of Long Marston and Tockwith runs across the centre of the battlefield, while a monument commemorating the battle stands halfway along it. Visitors can also walk to the rabbit warren from where Cromwell's cavalry launched its attack.

▶ *battlefieldstrust.com*

2 The Queen's Sconce, Newark NOTTS

Where the royalists struggled to defend a key military location

The town of Newark was viewed by both crown and parliament as an important strategic military location, and suffered three separate sieges during the period, in 1643, 1644 and 1646.

Newark was staunchly royalist in its loyalties throughout the campaign but eventually surrendered after a six-month parliamentarian siege in 1646.

The royalists built major earthwork defences at the edge of Newark, which were used as platforms from which to prevent the advance of the enemy.

The Queen's Sconce in Newark, named for Queen Henrietta Maria who passed through the town in 1643, was one of a pair of earthworks guarding the entrance to the town. The sconce, essentially a fort made of earth, is surrounded by a ditch about 10 metres wide and around 4–5 metres deep, and was used to spot advancing enemy troops. Square-shaped, with bastions at each corner, the Queen's Sconce would have given the royalists an excellent view of the crossing point over the river Devon at Markhall Bridge and the Fosse Way.

As well as the Sconce, in Newark today visitors can explore the Civil War Centre – a major national museum – and can also follow a civil war trail around this attractive historic town.

▶ *nationalcivilwar centre.com*

PHOTOLIBRARY

3 Naseby NORTHAMPTONSHIRE

Where parliament's New Model Army fought, and won, its first major battle

Fought on 14 June 1645, the battle of Naseby is seen by many as the battle that made an overall parliamentary victory in England inevitable, because it was here that the royalists faced the New Model Army of Fairfax and Cromwell for the first time. This new Puritan force was made up of full-time, paid soldiers, liable for service anywhere in the country and no longer led by peers or members of parliament with little military knowledge.

The royalists were heavily outnumbered, fighting uphill on difficult terrain with the wind against them, and were no match for Cromwell's professional fighters. Contemporary sources tell us that the royalist forces, who believed they were chasing a retreating army, marched over the hill to find themselves instead confronted by an advancing, 15,000-strong New Model Army – a sight that must have struck fear into their hearts.

Although Rupert's horse overwhelmed the parliamentarian left wing, they went off plundering away from the battlefield. Cromwell on the right not only won his cavalry battle but also regrouped and made a decisive assault on the royalist infantry, who had been holding their own until he arrived. Today, you can learn more about the battle from an information board and monument on the road out of the village of Naseby, at a point where you can survey the entire battlefield.

▶ *naseby.com*

A stone monument commemorates the battle of Naseby in June 1645, which saw a decisive victory for parliament's New Model Army

ALAMY/BILL BLAKE/BASING HOUSE

The Queen's Sconce in Newark, as seen from above. Its position gave the royalists an excellent vantage point from which to spot enemy attacks

4 Basing House, Basingstoke

HAMPSHIRE

Where up to 100 royalist supporters were massacred

When it was built in 1535 by Sir William Paulet, the 1st Marquess of Winchester and lord treasurer of England, Basing House was the largest private residence in England, comprising some 360 rooms and visited by monarchs such as Henry VIII and Elizabeth I.

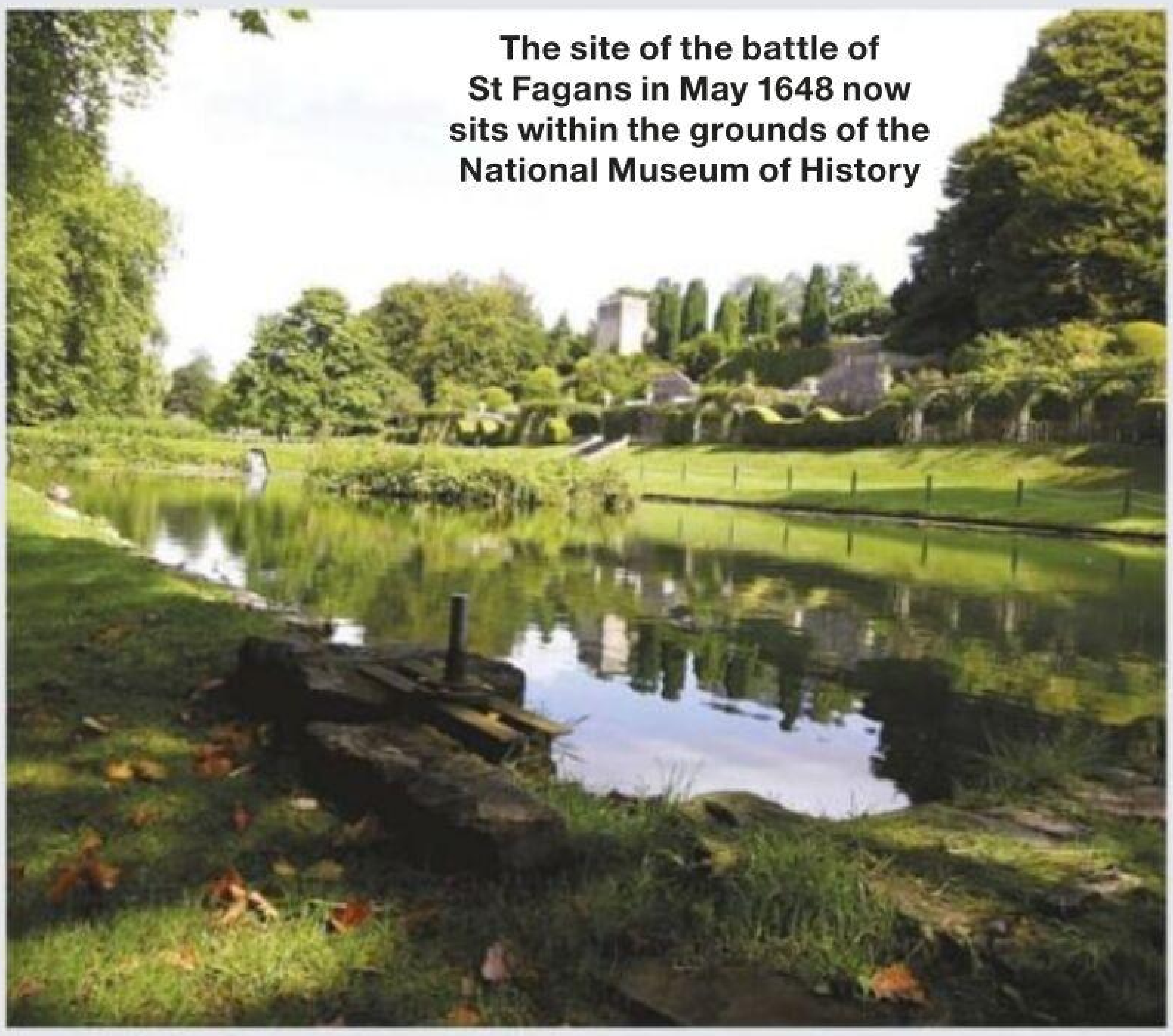
At the time war broke out in 1642, the house was owned by John Paulet, 5th Marquess of Winchester, a staunch royalist and a prominent Catholic who defended the house in the name of the king during three separate attacks by parliamentarian forces. When the house finally fell to Cromwell's troops in October 1645, it became the scene for one of the few massacres of the English theatre of the wars, and was eventually burned to the ground.

A parliamentary source from the time wrote of the carnage that ensued once the house had been stormed: "In the several rooms, and about the house, there were slain 74, and only one woman… who provoked our soldiers into a further passion… The plunder continued until Tuesday night. One soldier had 120 pieces in gold for his share, others plate, others jewels… And what the soldiers left, the fire took hold."

Up to 100 people were slain in cold blood, and John Paulet was sent to the Tower of London on charges of high treason. The remains of the house can still be seen today, though the Great Barn is the only part of the house to remain intact.

▶ *https://hampshireculturaltrust.org.uk/basing-house*

The remains of the cellar in the Great Hall at Basing House



The site of the battle of St Fagans in May 1648 now sits within the grounds of the National Museum of History

5 St Fagans CARDIFF

Where Cromwell crushed a rebellion

In May 1648, a major battle between crown and parliament took place when parliamentary leaders John Poyer (governor of Pembroke Castle), Colonel Rice Powell and Rowland Laugharne declared for the king and advanced on Cardiff. The three were disillusioned with the parliamentary cause and feared that their forces were to be disbanded.

Hearing of the rebellion, Cromwell and 3,000 men from the highly trained New Model Army defeated the 8,000-strong royalist army just outside Cardiff in the battle of St Fagans. Laugharne and his fellow turncoats fled the battlefield and barricaded themselves in Pembroke Castle before that stronghold fell to Cromwell's siege eight weeks later.

Visitors to St Fagans National Museum of History can still walk the battlefield, although the topography has changed somewhat since 1648. Pembroke Castle is also open to the public.

▶ *https://museum.wales/stfagans/*

PHOTOLIBRARY WALES/ALAMY

6 Drogheda COUNTY LOUTH

Where hundreds of Irish soldiers were slaughtered in cold blood

Although a great deal of the fighting took place on English soil, many historians see the period as a war of all three kingdoms, and certainly Ireland witnessed some of its bloodiest encounters.

In August 1649, Cromwell and 10,000 troops set sail for Ireland to reconquer the country for England and to seek vengeance for the slaughter of Protestant settlers at the hands of Irish Catholics in 1641. They were intent on delivering the "righteous judgment of God upon these barbarous wretches".

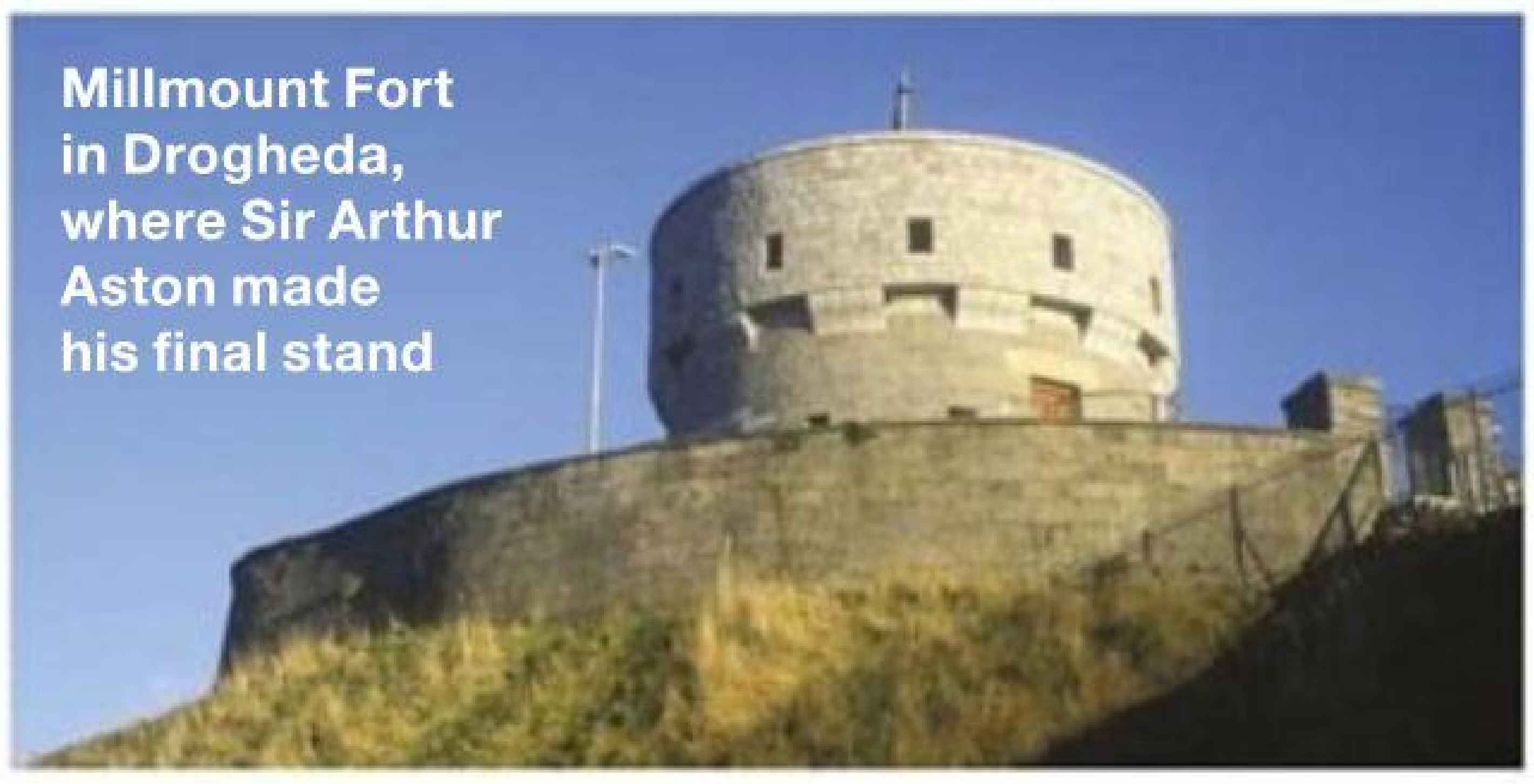
Marching north from Dublin, Cromwell and his army besieged Drogheda. The town was in the hands of royalist Catholic commander Sir Arthur Aston, who refused to surrender the town. A bombardment of the city walls broke Drogheda's resistance, and what followed was one of the period's worst atrocities. Around 3,500 people were slaughtered over a 48-hour period – several hundred in cold blood after they had surrendered. Nine in ten of the town's common soldiers were killed, and the rest were sent as slaves to Barbados.

Historical debate still rages as to whether any civilians were killed in cold blood; two recent accounts concluded that around 700 civilians perished in the crossfire.

The events at Drogheda were designed to terrorise other Irish towns into surrender, and a further 32 towns were captured over a nine-month period, securing the eastern side of Ireland for parliament.

The original Millmount Fort, where Aston made his last stand before being allegedly beaten to death with his own wooden leg, no longer stands, but a 19th-century replacement is open to the public. You can also visit St Peter's Church, where many royalist soldiers took refuge before Cromwell's forces burned its steeple – killing those inside.

▶ *millmount.net*



Millmount Fort in Drogheda, where Sir Arthur Aston made his final stand

7 Dunbar EAST LOTHIAN

Where Charles II and his Scottish army failed to regain the English throne

ANCIENT MONUMENT
DOON
HILL

Royalist forces camped at Doon Hill before suffering a crushing defeat

The battle of Dunbar on 3 September 1650, fought more than 18 months after the execution of Charles I and the declaration of a Commonwealth in England, was one of the most important and well-documented clashes in Scotland.

The king's execution had effectively ended the union of England and Scotland, and in February 1649 the Scottish parliament had declared the dead king's son, Charles II, "King of Great Britain, France and Ireland", in hope of achieving a Presbyterian church settlement once the king had been restored to the throne.

Charles II landed on Scottish soil in June 1650, where he was proclaimed King of Scotland. On hearing the news, the English parliament decided to take action. Anticipating a Scottish invasion under Charles II to regain the English throne, it launched a pre-emptive strike, sending some 15,000 troops across the border.

The Scots retaliated with a superior force of 25,000, and eventually met the New Model Army at Dunbar in what was ultimately an extraordinary parliamentary victory. Trapped between the Scottish army and the open sea, Cromwell found himself completely surrounded, and made the decision to launch a night attack. It was a highly risky move, but one that proved overwhelmingly successful. Caught completely off guard, the Scots lost 3,000 troops in the ensuing clash, and gave up a further 10,000 in prisoners.

Dunbar became one of Cromwell's greatest victories, and opened the way for the parliamentarians to conquer all of Scotland. Though much of the battlefield has now been built over, visitors can still walk to Doon Hill, from where royalist commander Sir David Leslie led his men to meet Cromwell's army.

▶ *battlefieldstrust.com*

ALAMY/STEVE JONES

The site of the battle of Dunbar, at which Cromwell won one of his finest victories in September 1650

8 The Commandery

WORCESTER

Where the last battle of the Civil War in England was fought

Worcester played a significant role in the opening and final chapters of the Civil War in England. The city saw one of the first major skirmishes between crown and parliament, in September 1642. Then, nine years later on 3 September 1651, it was the scene of the last Civil War battle on British soil – a clash with which Cromwell quashed (for the time being, at least) Charles II's attempts to gain the English throne.

Believing always that he was fighting God's cause, Cromwell described the battle as his "crowning mercy", referring to the clash as God's final blessing on his victorious parliamentary army.

After Charles II and his army arrived in Worcester in August 1651, the Commandery was used as the personal headquarters for William, 2nd Duke of Hamilton and the royalist commander in chief. During the battle itself, the building was used as a dressing station for wounded soldiers and the duke was treated there for a gunshot to the leg. Although the limb was later amputated, the duke died of gangrene and blood poisoning, and was buried under the altar in Worcester Cathedral.

The Commandery is open to the public and boasts excellent displays on the city's role in the civil wars.

▶ *worcestershire.gov.uk/museums/info/1/the_commandery*

The Commandery, in Worcester's city centre

Charles I's secret agent

Through the long and difficult years of the Civil War, the king needed all the help he could get. **John Fox** tells the story of one woman who came to the king's aid in many subtle ways

ILLUSTRATION BY BECCA THORNE

During the Civil War, a mysterious woman smuggled gold to Charles I, masterminded royal escape attempts and ran secret correspondence networks across England and southern Scotland. She was a red-haired woman named Jane Whorwood, daugher of a Scot, and she was one of the royalists' most effective secret weapons in their struggle with Oliver Cromwell's parliamentarian forces.

Why is Jane not better known? Others (such as courtiers whom she had organised and inspired) took the credit for her work, leaving her remembered mainly, if at all, for her 'brief encounter' with the king when he was paroled from prison on the Isle of Wight in 1648, just months before his execution. She died in 1684, unsung and in obscurity.

Jane or 'Jeane' was stepdaughter to the Scottish laird James Maxwell, Black Rod, Garter Usher and Groom of the Bedchamber to Charles I. (Her father, William Ryder, an overseer of the Royal Mews at Charing Cross, died in 1617 when she was five years old.) Maxwell, also pawnbroker to the bankrupt king, taught her about money-raising and the snake pits at court. Jeane was to put these lessons to good effect in later life.

In 1634, Jeane left her home to enter an unhappy arranged marriage to the heir to Holton Park, near Oxford. Jeane Ryder became Jane Whorwood, lady of an English manor and mother of four children. Holton, however, was parochial and, apparently, unwelcoming, and Jane spent much of her time in London.

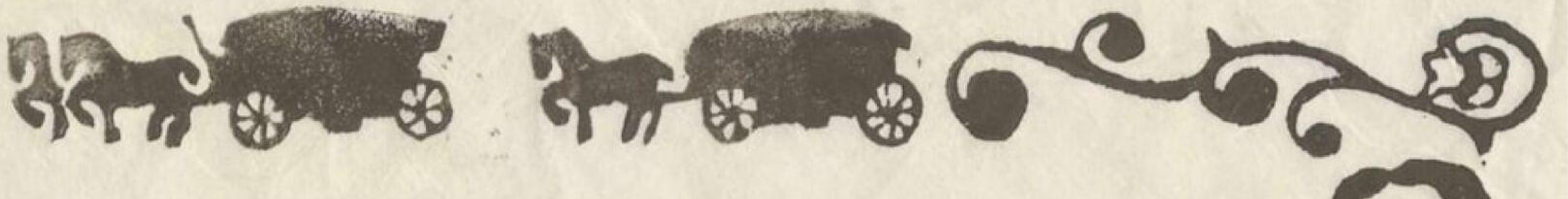
Gold smuggler

Jane's life was to change dramatically soon after the first engagements of the Civil War, when Charles decamped his Westminster court to Oxford. In late 1642, the king turned the university town into his royal capital. Courtiers and financiers quickly drew Jane, as Maxwell's stepdaughter, into the war effort. The king needed money (cash, not credit) to pay his army, and she would play a pivotal role in procuring it.

Oxford was cut off from the London merchants who had financed Charles in peacetime in the absence of parliament (which the king himself had dissolved). At first, Jane's stepfather worked with and profited from this private finance initiative, but in 1643 he retreated home to Scotland. This was Jane's cue to step into the breach, taking on her stepfather's contacts and the task of smuggling merchant gold from the capital to the king's new court.

Virtually all financial records from the Oxford garrison were burned in 1646 when the city surrendered to parliament and Sir Thomas Fairfax's New Model Army. However, one complete ledger, published only in 1830, and one merchant family's final plea for repayment from the crown in 1680 reveal that Jane masterminded

BECCA THORNE



the transport of at least £85,000 in gold into Oxford, mainly from Sir Paul Pindar, a leading royalist. The sum matched the army quartermaster's bill for 18 months, and almost the total amount of plate smelted for the Oxford war mint. However, the sheer weight of the gold created problems.

Laundresses, with waggon-loads of soap in barrels, collaborated in the effort, and college bursars, who smuggled plate and precious books out of the university town in barrels, advised. Jane, meanwhile, contributed the confidence and logistical knowhow to carry off the operation. Her letters are fluent and courtly but – to historians' great regret – unfailingly discreet.

We can catch only a brief glimpse of Jane's Oxford networks, but by 1647 the glimpses are sequential insights and her name is regularly mentioned. She set up links between Charles, her Hamilton brother-in-law in Scotland, and English county royalists. She bribed, lobbied and raised funds. She networked London city financiers with moderate politicians confined in the Tower of London, and connected both of these with the king, who was by then himself incarcerated.

In 1646, just before Oxford surrendered, Charles fled to the sanctuary of the Scots army outside Newark. From there he spent 33 months in travelling captivity, "a golden ball cast between [parliament and the army]… a passenger in a Hackney chariot". The Scots held him at Newcastle until parliament paid their war costs; the English progressed him slowly south to three months of majestic limbo at Hampton Court Palace.

When soldiers threatened his life during the debates at Putney, near Hampton, the king fled to the Isle of Wight, where the parliamentarian governor was his chaplain's nephew, and married to the daugher of Cromwell's cousin. By November 1647, Charles was under close guard on the island, at Carisbrooke Castle.

In March that year, Jane masterminded Charles's first escape attempt. "So well have I organised the business, nothing but himself can let [fail] it," she wrote. Yet fail he did. The king was unable to squeeze between window bar and frame; then, in May, the governor caught him removing the bar from a window of another apartment.

The king had invited her to a brief encounter, in sexually explicit terms

Jane had organised astrological advice, acid to weaken the bar, and chartered a ship to smuggle the king with her to Holland. That ship lay five weeks in the Medway, off the coast near Queenborough, just as Kent rose in revolt against parliament and mutiny broke out in the navy.

Strangely helpful

All the while, parliament watched Jane closely. A senior blockade captain was ordered to board her ship, yet he was strangely helpful, and even advised her about passes. Shortly afterwards he was arrested as the most high-ranking mutineer. "Had the rest done their parts as carefully as Whorwood, the king would [now] have been at large," wrote the Marquis of Hertford to Jane's brother-in-law, the Earl of Lanark.

Despite the king's escape attempts, and various uprisings, parliament – eager to fend off an army coup – suddenly offered him negotiations. Within hours of Charles's guards being stood down, Jane visited his quarters at Carisbrooke, at night. He had invited her to a brief encounter some weeks before, in sexually explicit terms.

As negotiations proceeded in the autumn of 1648, Jane monitored London and took astrological advice on the king's behalf. In November 1648, Charles was taken from the Isle of Wight and brought to London for trial. Jane had ridden overnight to London to confirm rumours of the planned arrest and, in an express letter, urged the king to escape, but he was too exhausted.

The last of some 50 conspiratorial, affectionate and anxious letters exchanged between the king and Jane reached Charles in Windsor Castle in 1648, on Christmas Day. He was executed at the end of January 1649.

Modern histories still tell how Jane embraced Charles on his procession across St James's Park to his execution. The anecdote has no provenance, but may be a Victorian gilding of the lily, or a counter to a 1649 story of a pregnant maidservant from Carisbrooke visiting the king at St James's.

Following the execution, Jane was convicted of bribing a parliamentary revenue committee. She was briefly imprisoned and fined £600, before returning to her home at Holton (where, in a bizarre twist of fate, Oliver Cromwell's daughter, Bridget, had married the New Model Army's commissary-general, Henry Ireton, in June 1646). Here she was to face a violent husband and his mistress, judicial separation and dramatic public battles for her maintenance. She died aged 72, unrewarded by the crown and in relative poverty.

Jane's last surviving wartime letter for the king's attention describes her November dash from the Isle of Wight to London in 1648: "The variety of accidents and dangers in my travails [travels] more become [belong to] a Romance than [a] Letter". That comment describes her life, too. A secret agent has few friends, leaves few records, and vanishes when her cause fails. **H**

John Fox wrote the article *Jane Whorwood, 1612–1684* (May 2009) for the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography. *www.oxforddnb.com*

DISCOVER MORE

BOOK

▶ **The King's Smuggler: Jane Whorwood, Secret Agent to Charles I** by John Fox (History Press, 2010)

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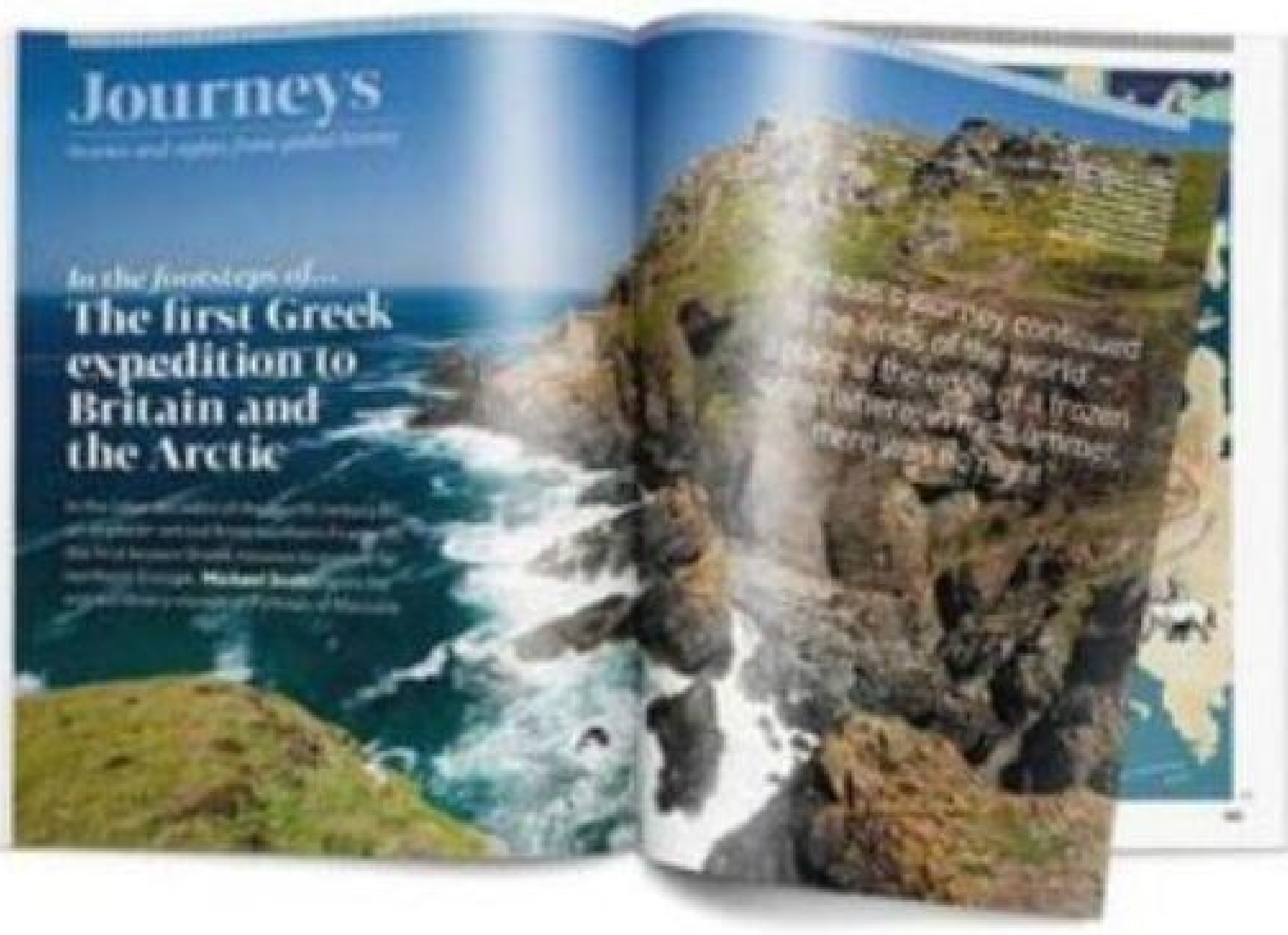
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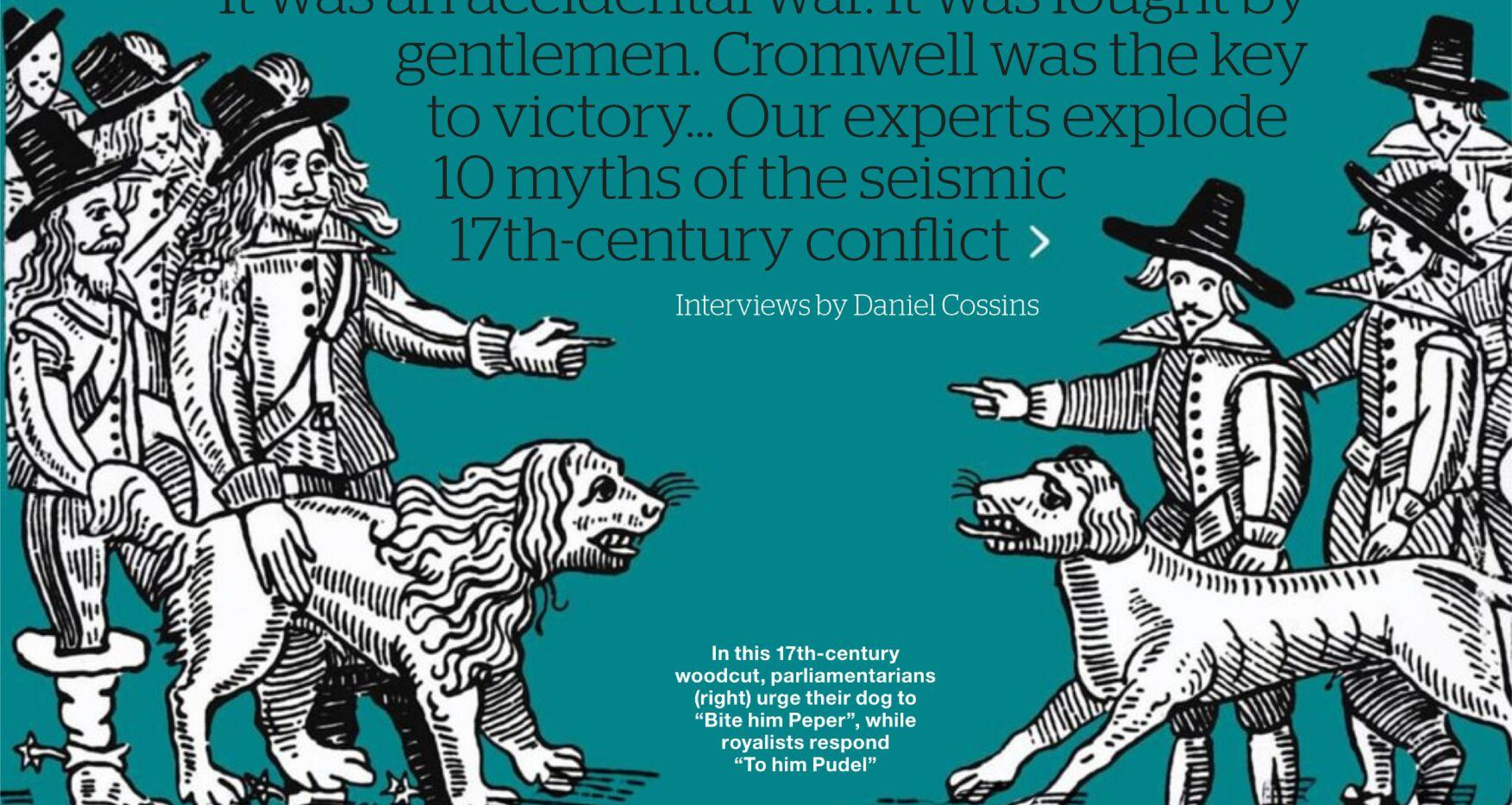
The great misconceptions of the Civil War

It was an accidental war. It was fought by gentlemen. Cromwell was the key to victory… Our experts explode 10 myths of the seismic 17th-century conflict ›

Interviews by Daniel Cossins



BRIDGEMAN

In this 17th-century woodcut, parliamentarians (right) urge their dog to "Bite him Peper", while royalists respond "To him Pudel"

1 War broke out by accident

Wrong, says John Adamson

This misconception has a long pedigree. It came about because, at the restoration of the monarchy in 1660, a number of those involved in raising forces against the king were still alive. They peddled the idea that the war was an accident and that no one was to blame – that the war "came out of the mist", as the parliamentarian Bulstrode Whitelock had it. But it's untrue.

Recent archival research has revealed that Charles I's aristocratic opponents, particularly the group around the Earl of Warwick, were preparing to use military force as early as the summer of 1640. They did this by calling in the Scottish army and by suborning English militia regiments that had been mobilised to meet the Scottish challenge. Warwick's group had a military strategy in case the king refused to call a parliament: four Yorkshire militia regiments were to join the Scots and march on London.

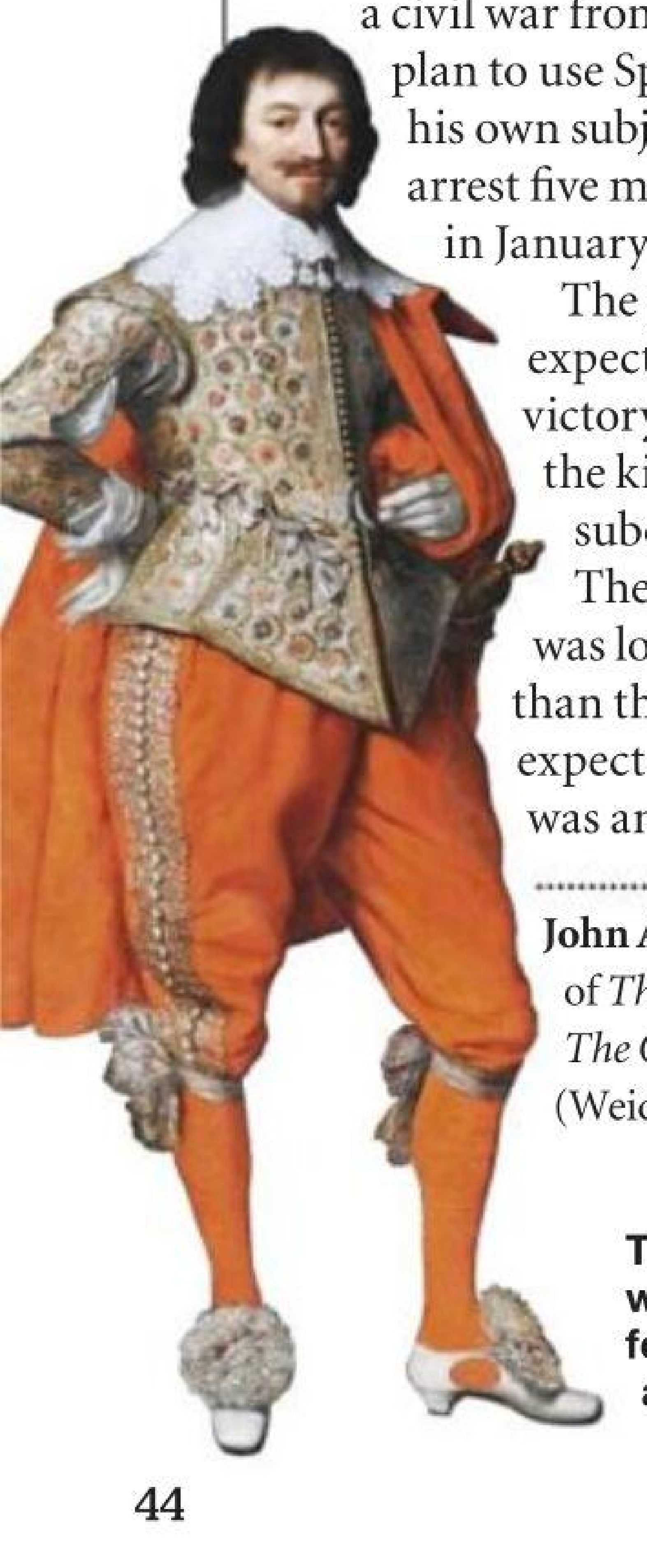
This was the backdrop to the first two years of the Long Parliament, called by Charles I in November 1640 in an attempt to raise money for war against the Scots. The king was aware that this group had committed treason. In fact, that was one of the reasons it was so difficult to reach settlement over the constitutional impasse in 1640. The stakes had been raised for both sides.

Charles I showed himself ready to risk a civil war from May 1640 with the plan to use Spanish troops against his own subjects. He also tried to arrest five members of parliament in January 1642.

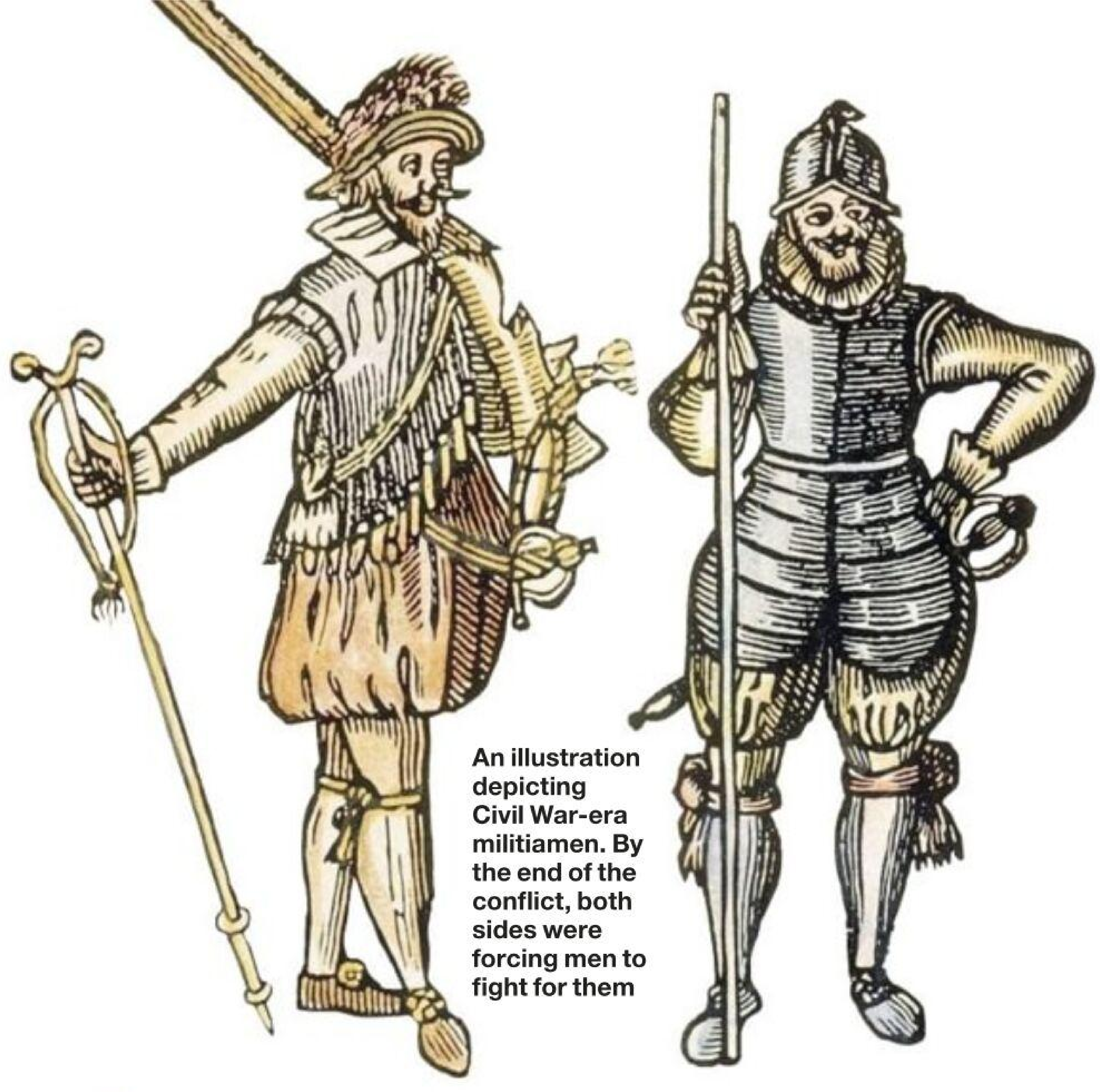
The parliamentarians expected to win a decisive victory that would force the king to accept his subordinate position.

The war that followed was longer and bloodier than the belligerents had expected, but its outbreak was anything but accidental.

John Adamson is the author of *The Noble Revolt: The Overthrow of Charles I* (Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 2007)



The Earl of Warwick was prepared to use force against Charles I as early as 1640



An illustration depicting Civil War-era militiamen. By the end of the conflict, both sides were forcing men to fight for them

2 Cavaliers were aristocrats, Roundheads were yeomen

Wrong, says Ronald Hutton

When I was a schoolboy, there was a textbook on the Tudor and Stuart period, part of which followed the fortunes of a mythical family from 1485 to 1660. The family divided during the Civil War, and the two brothers were pictured arguing; the text pointed out that the elder, the Cavalier, wore satin and lace, while the younger, the Roundhead, wore linen and leather. It went on to state that the Cavaliers mostly comprised aristocracy and gentry, while the Roundheads were drawn from the lesser gentry and the middle classes.

The reality was that, to challenge the authority of the king, parliament needed to have a substantial number of great nobles on its side. In the words of John Adamson, it was a "noble revolt". The older nobility, who had served in government and at court, tended to fight against the king; their long-established positions gave them a greater confidence in challenging the crown. The classic royalist noble tended to hail from a family that had not been involved in government or court, or a nouveau riche who had obtained their title since 1600.

Both sides had more or less equal support among the rest of society. And on both sides, rank-and-file troops on the ground came from the lower classes and fought for the same reasons: partly ideological, but mostly because big money was offered up front for service at the beginning of the war. Then, when the money ran out, they were conscripted by force by both sides.

But there is a twist to the story. Both sides gradually pushed out the nobility from their armies during the course of the war because, in order to win, they had to grab talent wherever they found it rising. By 1649, just 8 per cent of the senior officers in parliament's New Model Army had been to university – by then, the mark of a gentleman. When you look at the king's field officers throughout the war, you find that three-quarters of them didn't have a coat of arms. In other words, they weren't even drawn from the class that traditionally ran local government, let alone central government.

Ronald Hutton is professor of history at the University of Bristol

BRIDGEMAN/TOPFOTO

3 The 1641 massacres in Ireland were one-sided affairs

Wrong, says Micheál Ó Siochrú

> “What triggered the cycle of violence were the **brutal retaliatory attacks** carried out by the colonial government”

The Irish rebellion of 1641 began as an attempt by Irish Catholics to defend their interests and recover lands that had been lost to Protestant settlers from England and Scotland, but it descended into a horrifying sectarian bloodbath. It is one of the great defining moments in Irish history – but what actually happened remains highly contested.

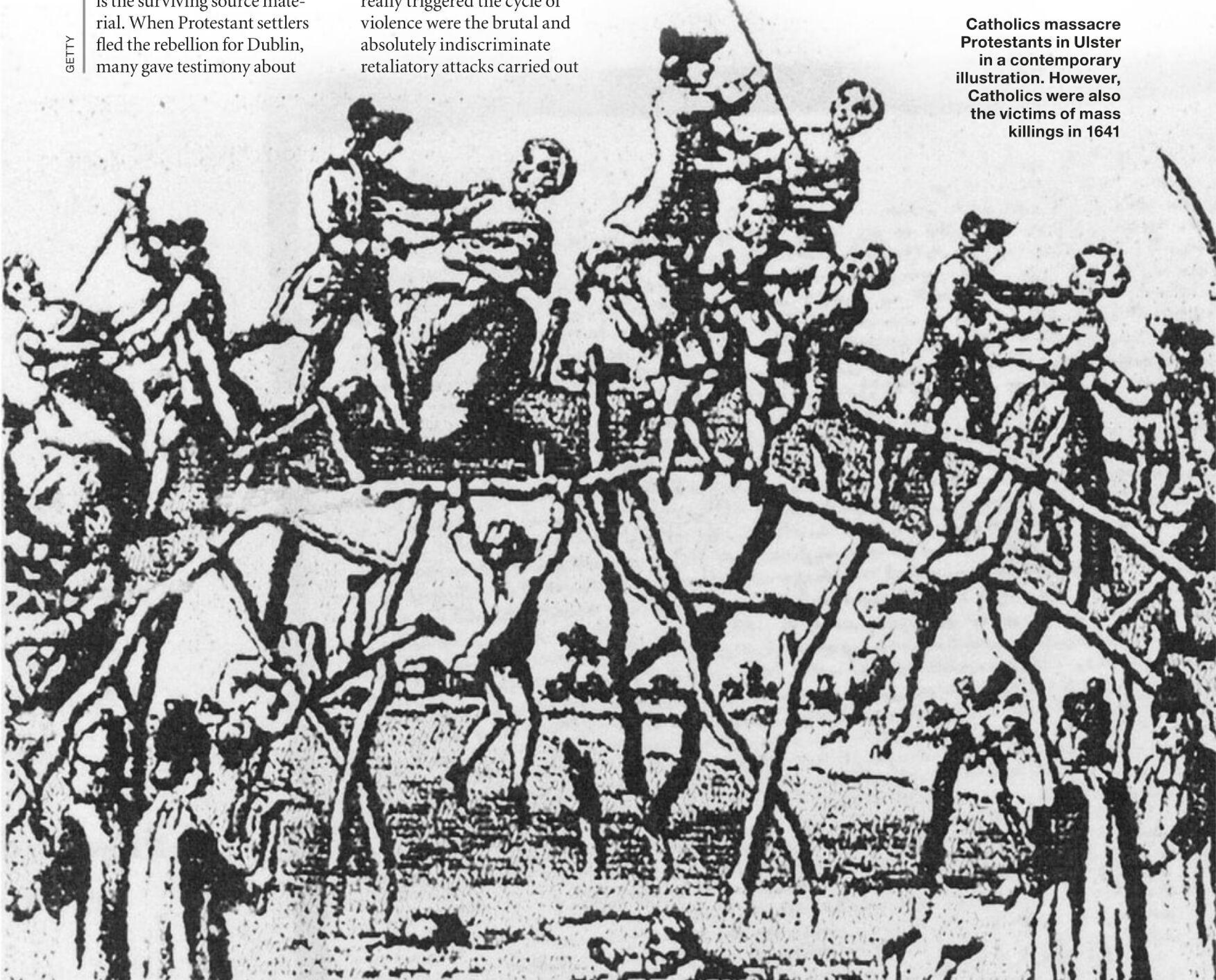
The focus of historical attention has been on the scale and ferocity of Catholic attacks on the Protestant settlers, and on the suffering of that community. Part of the reason for that is the surviving source material. When Protestant settlers fled the rebellion for Dublin, many gave testimony about their experiences, and about 8,000 of the depositions survive today, housed at Trinity College Dublin and now available to read online (http://1641.tcd.ie). The sheer volume of this evidence has meant that the narrative has been dominated by the Protestant experience. What isn't present in the depositions, or in most surviving evidence, is the Catholic side of the story.

There is no question that the Protestant settler community underwent a traumatic experience. But in the initial weeks of the rising, there were relatively few killings. What really triggered the cycle of violence were the brutal and absolutely indiscriminate retaliatory attacks carried out by the colonial government in November and December 1641. It quickly became clear that they were targeting the entire Catholic population. You had summary justice, mass executions and the destruction of entire communities. This unrestrained violence generated a reaction, and the violence spiralled, escalating into a full-scale sectarian bloodbath.

The narrative of Protestants suffering at the hands of savage Catholics has played a key role in creating the British Protestant identity still very much in evidence in the north of Ireland today. But it doesn't explain what really went on in the first six months of the rebellion. This was not a one-sided massacre but a period of unrestrained warfare, with attacks from both sides, with all its attendant horrors.

Micheál Ó Siochrú is author of *God's Executioner: Oliver Cromwell and the Conquest of Ireland* (Faber & Faber, 2008)

GETTY



Catholics massacre Protestants in Ulster in a contemporary illustration. However, Catholics were also the victims of mass killings in 1641

4 Large numbers of people were unaffected

Wrong, says Ann Hughes

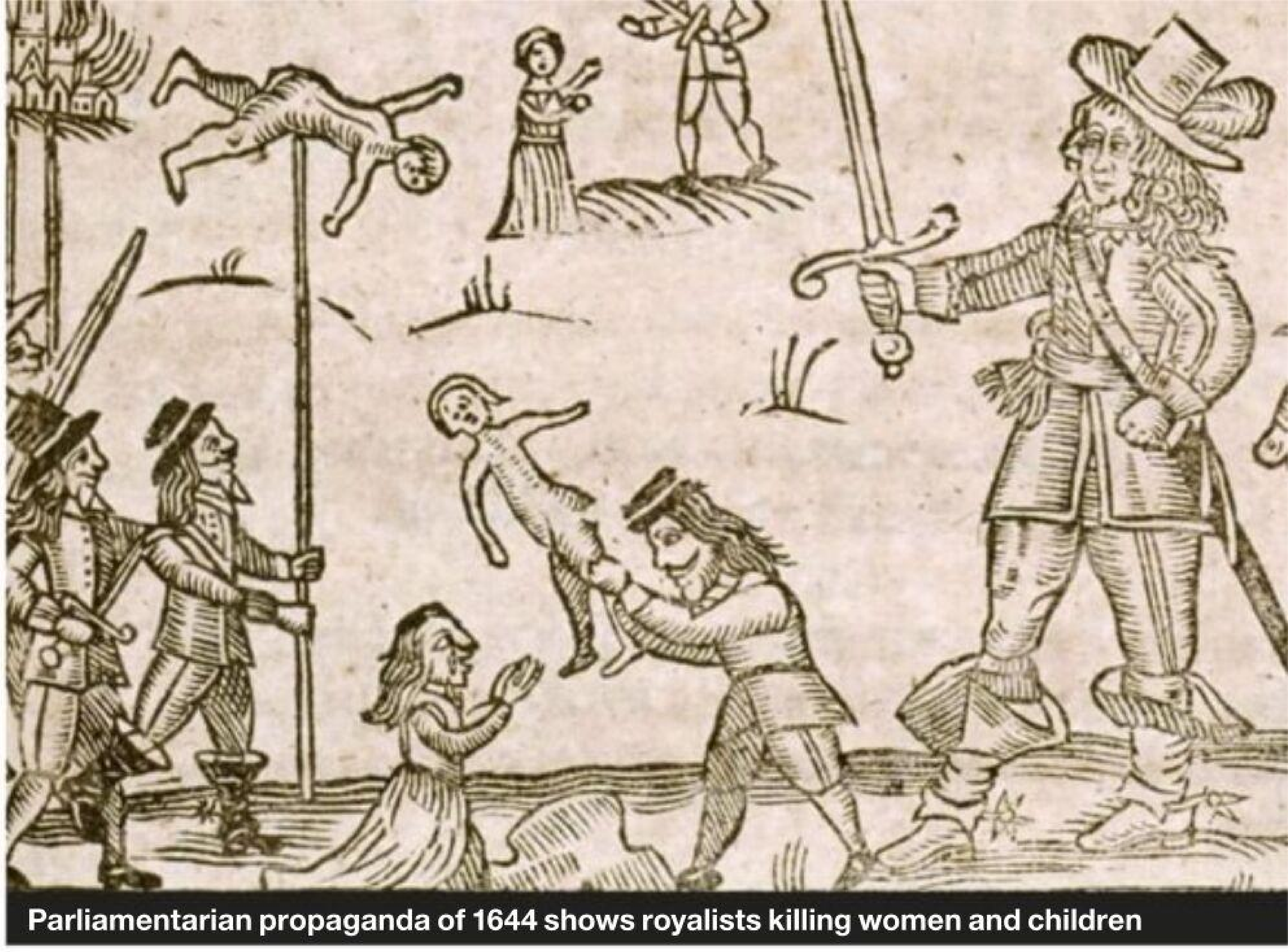
At least one in 10 – perhaps as many as one in five – men in England and Wales fought in the Civil War. It has been calculated that loss of life, in proportion to the national population of the time, was greater than in the First World War. Perhaps 85,000 people – mostly men but also women camp followers – died in combat. Up to 130,000 people were killed indirectly, primarily as a result of disease spread by troops.

Many parts of the country saw fighting, but everyone was affected by recruitment of troops and troop movements, which brought disease and demands for compulsory boarding, usually without payment. National taxation was heavier than ever before – perhaps 10 times prewar rates. And the impacts reached far down the social scale: an excise on many consumer goods had an effect on even those people too poor to pay taxes based on land or goods. Administration was affected in many areas, too, which meant that poor relief was disrupted. The birth rate was 10 per cent lower in the 1650s than it had been 20 years earlier, and the population stagnated. Disruption of trade and bad harvests meant that for ordinary people the late 1640s were some of the hardest on record.

So the social, economic and cultural effects of the war have been significantly underestimated. It involved a massive and enduring expansion of the state's capacity to extract resources from the population, and there was significant familial and demographic upheaval. It was so traumatic in an English context that it was easier to try to forget about it.

Ann Hughes is professor of early modern history, emeritus, at Keele University

A weight used to calculate the tax owed on wool. Tax rose by up to 1,000 per cent during the Civil War



Parliamentarian propaganda of 1644 shows royalists killing women and children

5 It was a restrained and gentlemanly conflict

Wrong, says Peter Gaunt

In some quarters there remains an impression that the Civil War was an almost 'civilised' conflict, waged in a restrained and reluctant manner by a small number of elite gentlemen.

Commanders on both sides generally did try to adhere to the military codes of conduct and rules of war set out by king and parliament, but they had none of the squeamishness that has been suggested. They were committed warriors, fighting for what they often believed to be a just cause, glorying in the defeat and, when necessary, destruction of the opposing force.

The Civil War was a conflict of major battles and incessant, dour skirmishing, raiding and counter-raiding, of siege and storm. Although the scale of the fighting and of the atrocities was not as great as that seen on the continent during the Thirty Years' War of 1618–48, many historians now suggest that the English and Welsh experience was not so different from that particular European war as was once thought.

To take one example, in December 1643 a party of royalist troops entered the village of Barthomley in Cheshire, whereupon a group of around 20 locals, including women, sought refuge in the tower of St Bertoline's Church. The royalist troops entered the church and forced the locals to come back down to ground level, both by burning pews and rushes at the foot of the tower to smoke them out, and by offering them quarter. However, when they emerged, 12 men were killed on the spot.

Following the king's truce in late summer 1643 with the Irish Catholic rebels who controlled most of Ireland – and his attempts to ship over troops from Ireland to fight for him – parliament took a hard line against so-called 'Irish' royalist troops. Parliamentarian troops often meted out brutal treatment to any royalist soldiers and camp followers who were thought to have Irish connections. Summary execution of troops, together with the killing, wounding or maiming of the women found travelling with them, became almost a matter of routine.

So the image of a restrained, gentlemanly affair is fundamentally wrong, and should have no place now in our interpretations of the Civil War.

Peter Gaunt is author of *The English Civil War: A Military History* (IB Tauris, 2014)

> "Roundheads often **meted out brutal treatment** to royalist soldiers and camp followers with Irish connections"

TOPFOTO/BRIDGEMAN

6 Cromwell won the war for parliament

Wrong, says Diane Purkiss

Although Oliver Cromwell was important, the general who in fact led the New Model Army to victory was Thomas Fairfax, who was in charge of the infantry forces. It was Fairfax who shaped the New Model Army, who trained them, and who developed the strategy critical to their overall success.

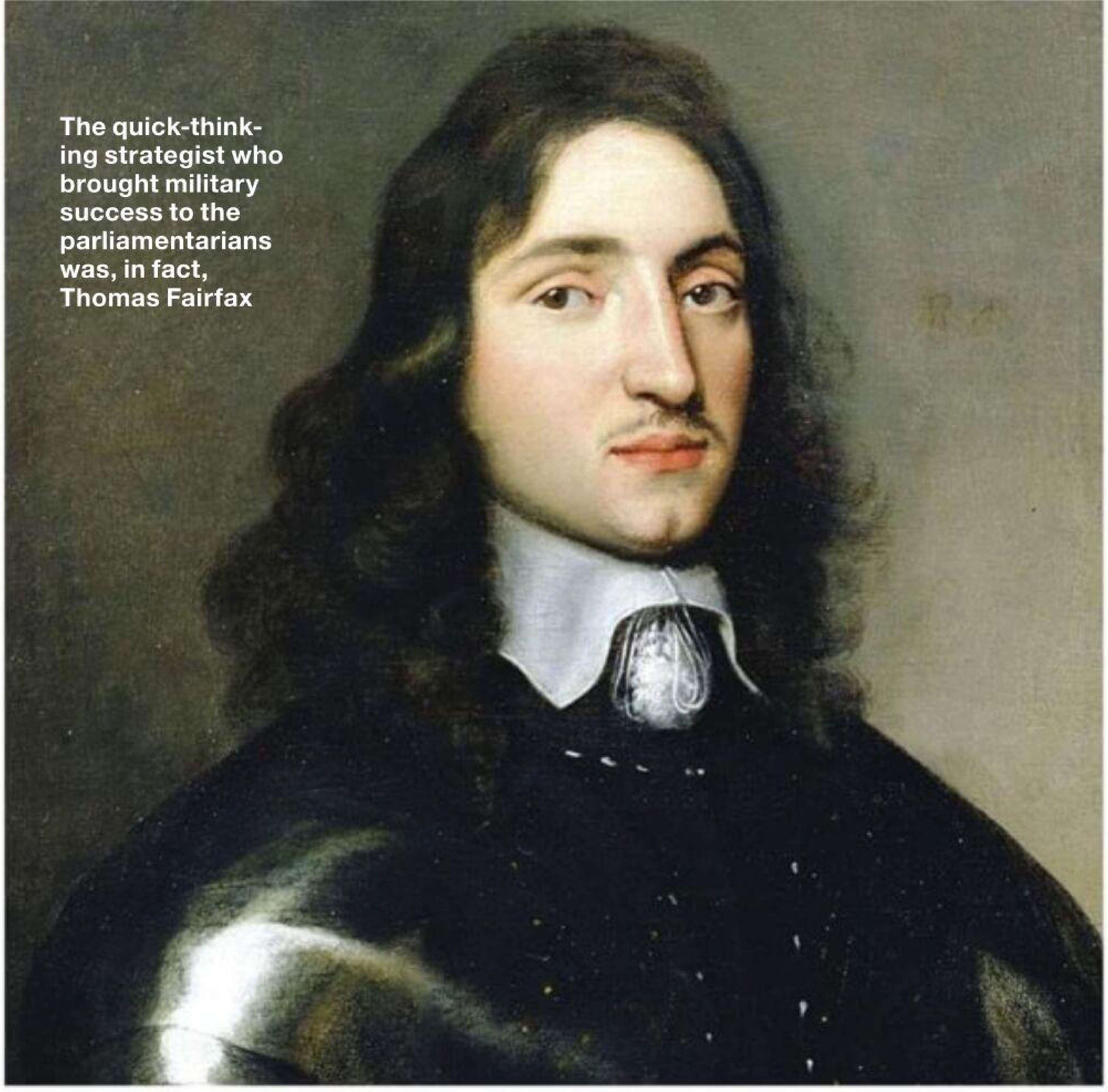
Parliament had to create the New Model Army because its own army had been destroyed. They were scraping around. People who were manifestly unfit for military service were called up, and it was Fairfax who was trusted with turning this job lot of ruffians into a proper military force. One of the crucial decisions he took was to promote to officer rank on merit, rather than on social rank. Fairfax had to fight a real political battle in the Commons and the Lords to push through this policy, but he succeeded, creating an army that was pretty much a meritocracy.

In June 1645, Fairfax and his New Model Army caught up with the king outside Naseby in Northamptonshire, where parliament won a sweeping victory. Cromwell was responsible for the overall battle plan, but it was Fairfax who took the initiative in changing that plan during the battle. The royalists had assumed that the parliamentarians' numerical advantage would be outweighed by the fact that they were a rabble of idiots. But when they realised the New Model Army was, thanks to Fairfax, actually very disciplined and well organised, they collapsed and fled.

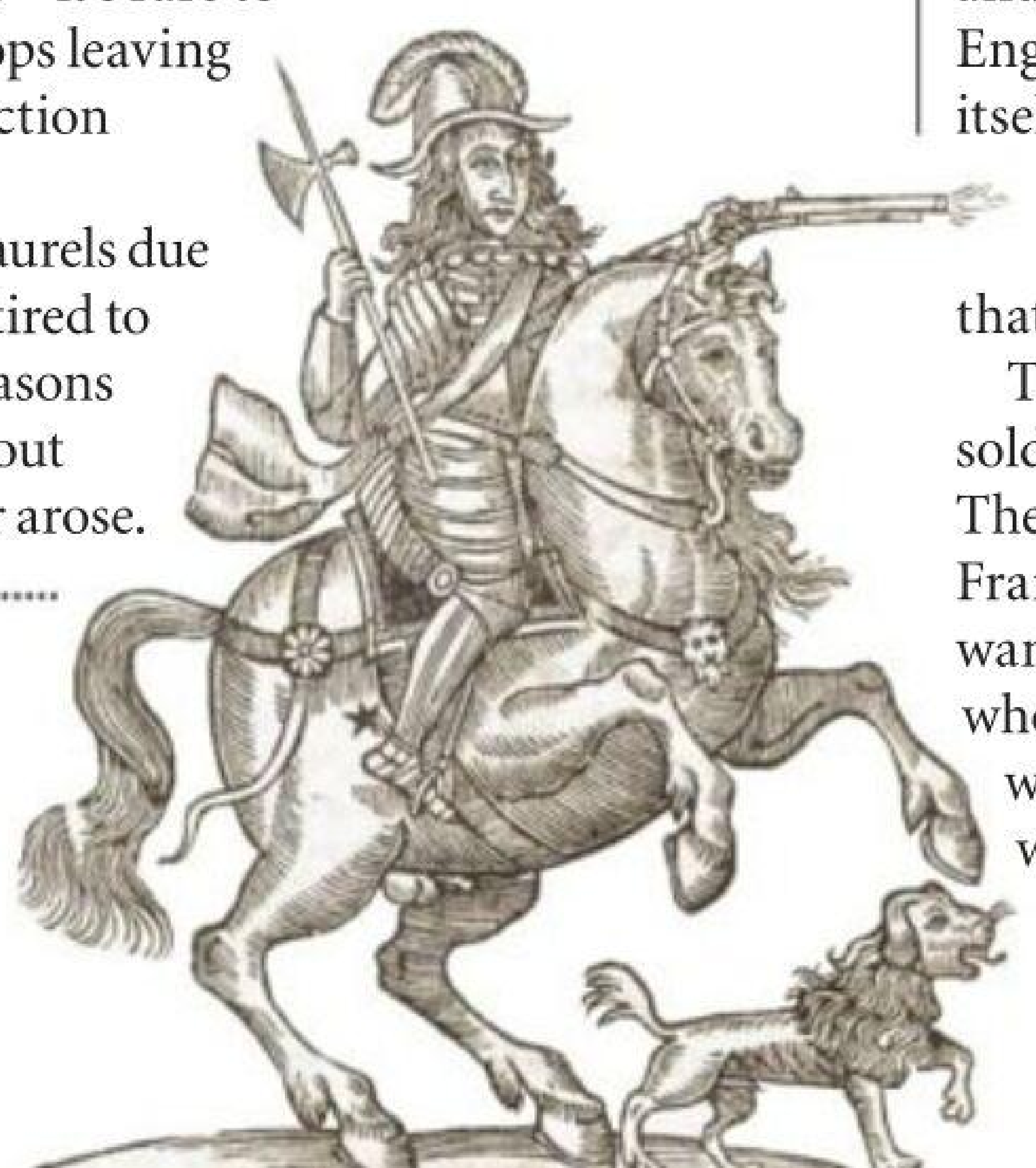
Fairfax wasn't one to brag about his own military skills, but in a crisis he had a terrific sense of what needed to be done – and he did it. Eventually, his New Model Army besieged Oxford, capturing what was then the royal capital. What was also remarkable was that he did it all very decently. In contrast with the late-stage royalist army, which was renowned for looting and pillaging, Fairfax's army was disciplined and controlled – it's rare to find an account of his troops leaving a trail of death and destruction through the countryside.

Rather than accept the laurels due to him as victor, Fairfax retired to the country – one of the reasons why the misconception about Cromwell winning the war arose.

Diane Purkiss is author of *The English Civil War: A People's History* (Harper Perennial, 2007)



The quick-thinking strategist who brought military success to the parliamentarians was, in fact, Thomas Fairfax



Half-German Prince Rupert fought for the king's forces

TOPFOTO/BRIDGEMAN

7 Only British people fought

Wrong, says Mark Stoyle

In the past few decades, historians have been keen to emphasise the British-ness of the Civil War, but it's often forgotten that quite large numbers of people from outside the British Isles were also involved in the conflict.

Most famous are the king's relatives: Henrietta Maria, his French wife, who was head of a royalist army in the north in 1643; and his two half-German nephews, Prince Rupert and Prince Maurice. But scores of foreign specialists – experts in military engineering, artillery and fortification – and cavalry commanders led both royalist and parliamentarian war efforts. England had been at peace with itself for a long time, so most English gentlemen didn't possess the military skills that were required.

The majority of foreign soldiers came from France. There were also Protestants from France and the Netherlands who wanted to fight against a king who often seemed to be allied with Catholicism. Then there were participants from outside western Europe. One of the most famous foreign mercenaries was a Croat called Captain Carlo Fantom, who fought for parliament. When asked why he'd come to fight, he said: "I care not for your cause – I come to fight for your half-crowns and your handsome women." Some came from even further afield. The most exotic cavalry regiment contained soldiers from Egypt, Mesopotamia and Ethiopia.

When the New Model Army was first formed, there were few foreigners involved. Indeed, several parliamentarians revelled in the idea that it was an army "entirely of our own nation". Towards the end of war, there were three regiments of French cavalry fighting for the king, and the parliamentarians made great use of this fact in their propaganda. Such perceptions meant that 'outlanders' had an influence out of all proportion to their numbers.

Mark Stoyle is professor of early modern history at the University of Southampton

8 For parliamentarians, it was a war of religion

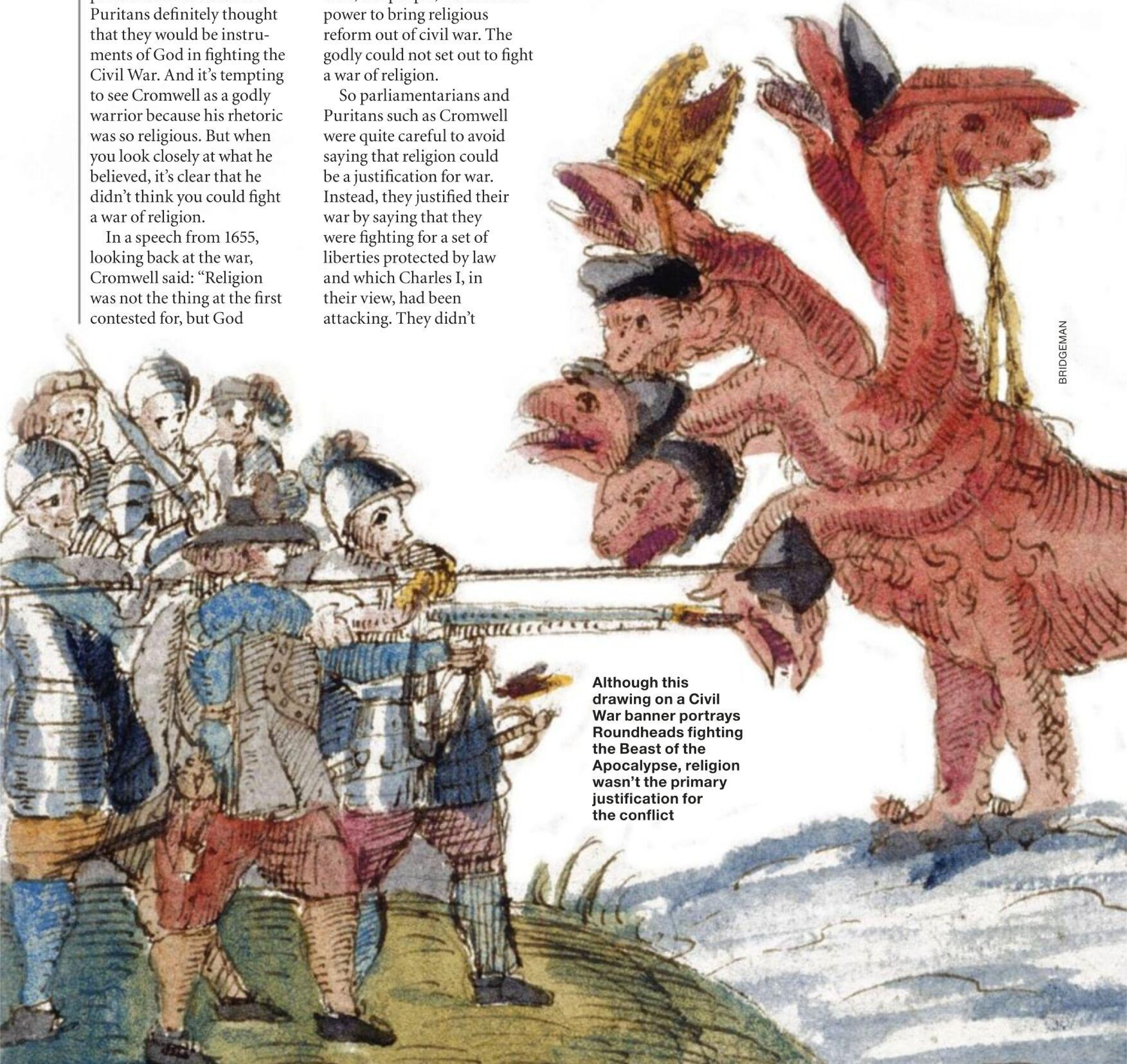
Wrong, says Rachel Foxley

It has been tempting to assume that the parliamentarians thought it was legitimate to go to war to defend religious liberty. It's quite an easy assumption to make because it's true that there was a huge amount of religious motivation whipping up parliamentarians. A lot of Puritans definitely thought that they would be instruments of God in fighting the Civil War. And it's tempting to see Cromwell as a godly warrior because his rhetoric was so religious. But when you look closely at what he believed, it's clear that he didn't think you could fight a war of religion.

In a speech from 1655, looking back at the war, Cromwell said: "Religion was not the thing at the first contested for, but God brought it to that issue at last and gave it to us by way of redundancy, and at last it proved that which is most dear to us." Historians have often dismissed this as a mistake or hindsight on Cromwell's part, but I think he was quite serious: it was God, not people, who had the power to bring religious reform out of civil war. The godly could not set out to fight a war of religion.

So parliamentarians and Puritans such as Cromwell were quite careful to avoid saying that religion could be a justification for war. Instead, they justified their war by saying that they were fighting for a set of liberties protected by law and which Charles I, in their view, had been attacking. They didn't think it was legitimate to fight for religion with the sword because religion could only be fought for with spiritual weapons. But they did think it legitimate to take up arms against a ruler who was breaking the law of the land. Along with political liberties and rights, this also included religion, because the English Reformation had been established through parliamentary statute.

Rachel Foxley is associate professor of history at the University of Reading



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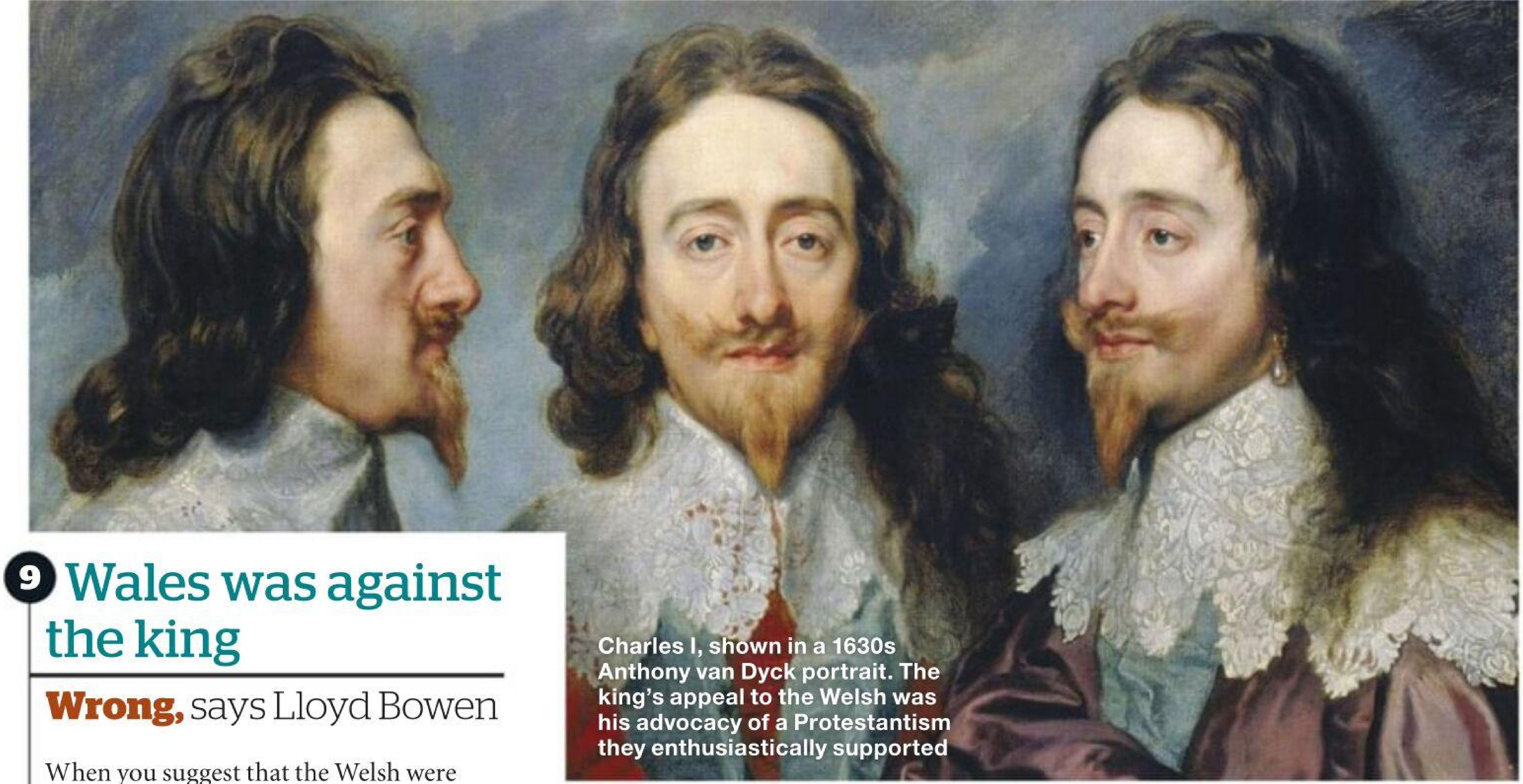
Although this drawing on a Civil War banner portrays Roundheads fighting the Beast of the Apocalypse, religion wasn't the primary justification for the conflict



Charles I, shown in a 1630s Anthony van Dyck portrait. The king's appeal to the Welsh was his advocacy of a Protestantism they enthusiastically supported

9 Wales was against the king

Wrong, says Lloyd Bowen

When you suggest that the Welsh were among the most ardent royalists, people are usually really surprised. Our historical memory has been refracted through a more modern tradition of left-wing radical politics. Many historians working in the shadow of that tradition have feted Welsh parliamentarians and republicans, suggesting that they were more representative of the country than was the case.

There was no more fervent hotbed of royalist sentiment during the Civil War than in Wales, earning it the soubriquet of the "nursery of the king's infantry". The propaganda of the time suggests that Wales was very enthusiastic in its support for Charles I. One pamphlet noted how the appearance of the king made the men of north Wales "flock to [his] standard like wilde geese".

Wales saw itself as having a special relationship with the crown – one to be defended with blood. An important part of that was Charles I's defence of a conservative Protestantism, one sold to the Welsh as a rediscovery of their ancient aboriginal religion, rather than the more radical version promulgated by the parliamentarians. They became passionate defenders of a particular type of church, with the king at its apex.

There was a smattering of support for parliament in some towns such as Cardiff and Wrexham, but these were minority voices. Wales was a reliable source of money and troops for the king, and it provided a bridgehead to bring troops from Ireland.

Lloyd Bowen is reader in early modern and Welsh history at the University of Cardiff

10 Parliament wanted union with Scotland

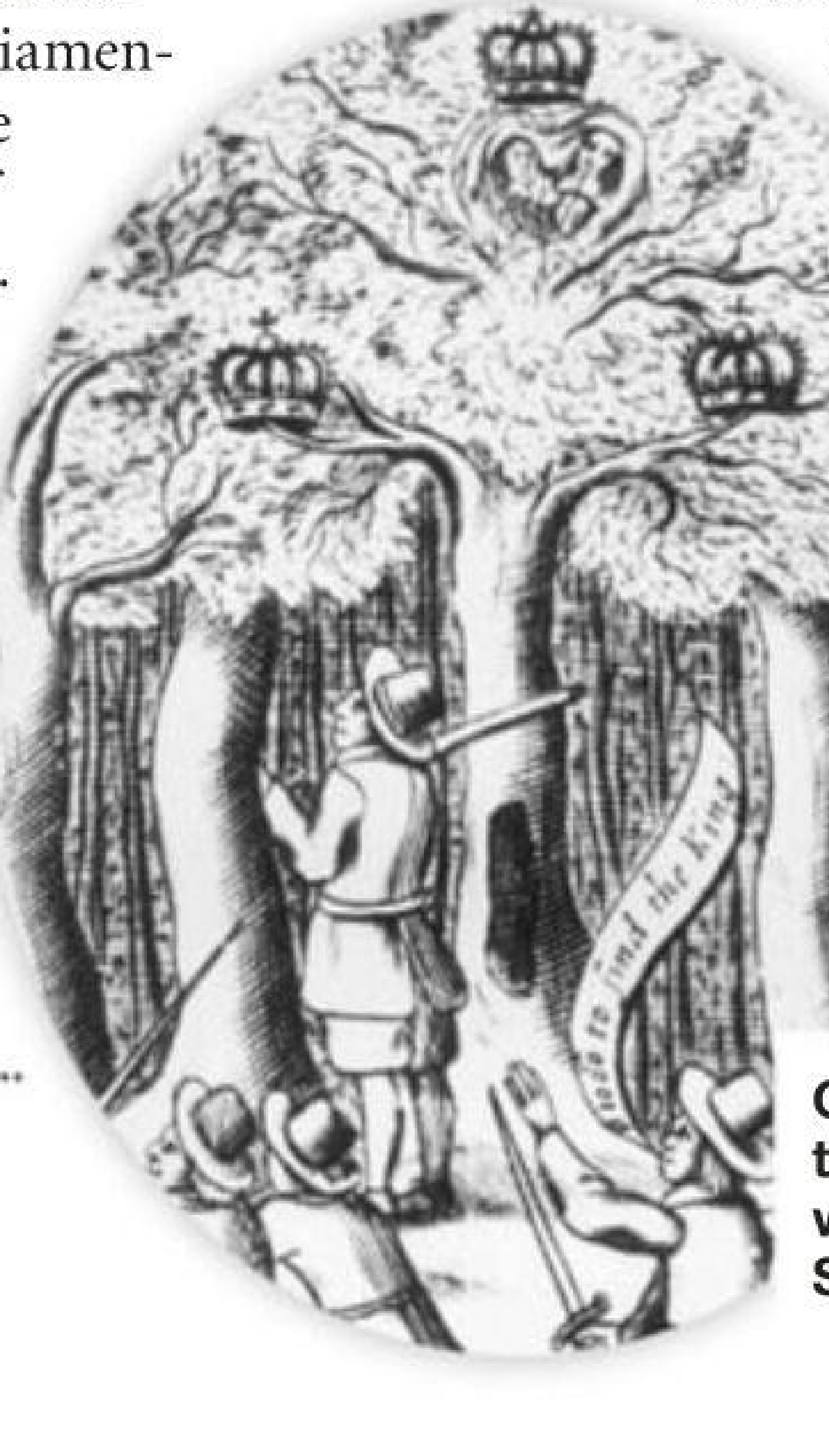
Wrong, says John Morrill

There is a perception that, in the mid-17th century, the English parliament forced Scotland to integrate into a greater Britain. Actually, parliament had been trying to avoid union for years and entered into it only reluctantly.

Throughout the 1640s, the Scots had been calling for a union because they believed that there could be no future for Scotland except in a defined federal relationship. The English parliament resisted for two main reasons. First, it was determined not to let Scotland impose strict separation of church and state and clerical supremacy. And second, it did not wish to allow the Scottish parliament to have any kind of veto over policies in England.

In return for Scottish support during the wars, parliament had promised federal union and a united church. But when parliament abolished the monarchy in England and Ireland after the execution of Charles I in 1649, it told the Scots they were an independent nation free to go their own way. The Scots refused to accept this, and voted to fight to instate Charles II as king of England, Scotland and Ireland.

After Cromwell defeated the Scots at Worcester in 1651, the English had to make a choice: they could either withdraw or they could occupy Scotland to prevent constant attacks on England. Eventually, they decided to quell the threat by uniting England with Scotland. So it was a reluctant conquest. There may have been no great enthusiasm for union, but it was deemed necessary. **H**


seek to find the King

Charles II hides up a tree after the 1651 battle of Worcester, where the royalist-supporting Scots were defeated

John Morrill is professor of British and Irish history at the University of Cambridge

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▶ **The National Civil War Centre**, Newark *nationalcivilwarcentre.com*

LISTEN AGAIN

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Daniel Cossins is a freelance journalist

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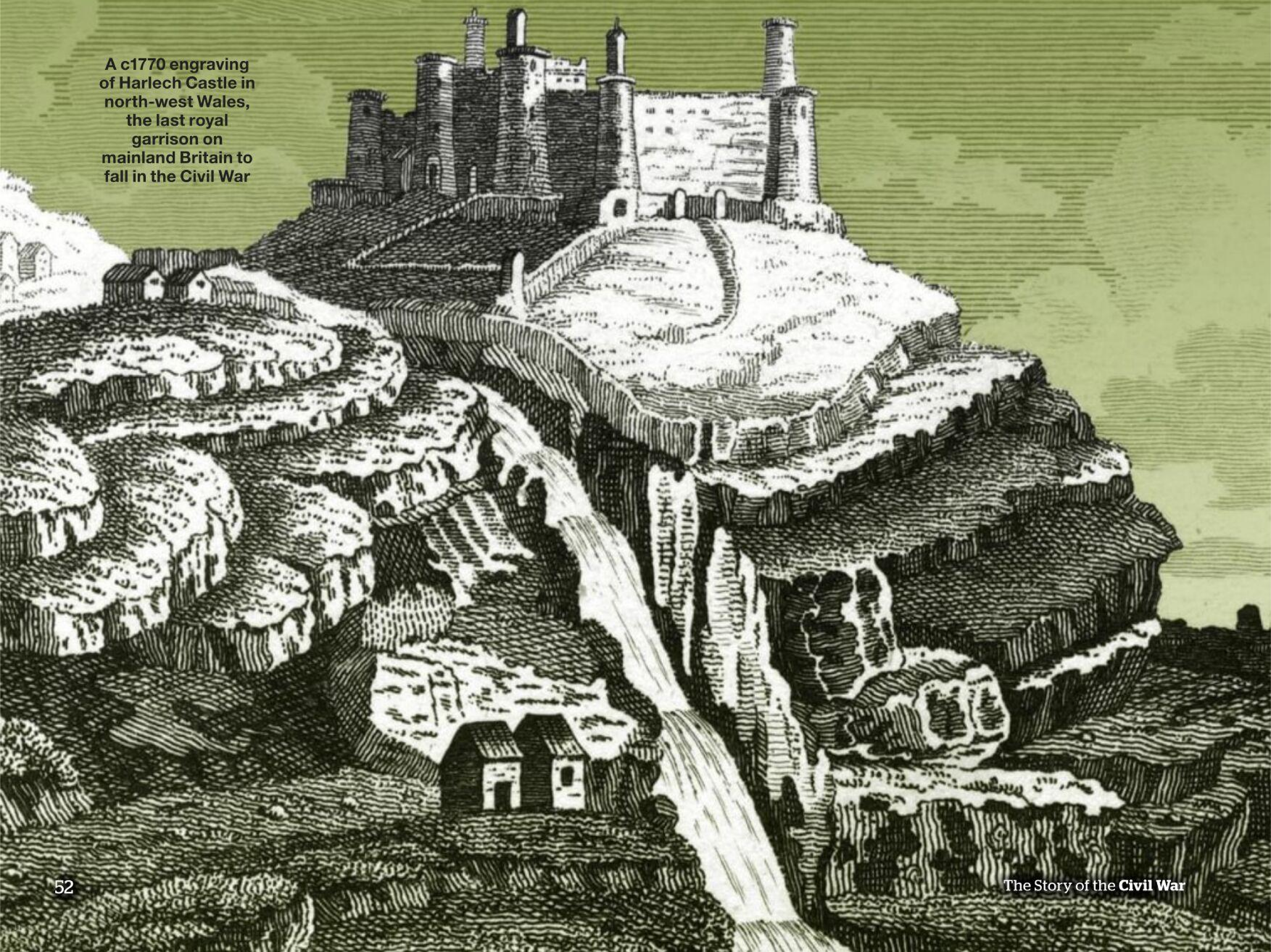
  Why the principality fought for the king
- **The home front**
  How women battled armies and financial crises
- **The Irish question**
  What were the impacts of Cromwell's Irish campaigns?
- **The prince and the devil dog**
  The royalist's poodle who became a media sensation
- **Life in wartime**
  How the conflict divided friends and destroyed towns

THIS LAST REFUGE OF MONARCHY

The conflict that tore Britain apart in the 1640s wasn't just an 'English' Civil War. **Lloyd Bowen** shows that the role of largely royalist Wales is often understated



A c1770 engraving of Harlech Castle in north-west Wales, the last royal garrison on mainland Britain to fall in the Civil War

Behind the beleaguered defences of Chepstow Castle in south-east Wales, a man of "gigantic stature and strength" stands near his standard. It depicts an arm holding a sword emerging from a cloud, and has a Welsh inscription: *Oes dalla hwn/Gwaerpen crwn* – "If this holds/Woe to the roundheads." The castle walls are breached, and a ferocious assault descends on the stalwart garrison. The huge man bearing the defiant motto is killed, his standard falls and the garrison capitulates.

The date is 25 May 1648, and these are the last moments of Sir Nicholas Kemeys, commander of the royalist forces at Chepstow and a gentleman who raised Welsh troops for the king at the first major battle of the Civil War six years earlier. For him, as for the rest of Wales, 1648 was the endgame – the point at which the flame of war against parliament guttered and failed before the might of Cromwell's New Model Army.

This brave last stand is emblematic of a neglected aspect of the 'English' Civil War – its Welsh dimension. Kemeys' early support for the cause of Charles I, and his sacrifice defending it at the very end of royalist resistance, are symbolic of his countrymen's ardent royalism. That his standard carried a Welsh inscription also alerts us to the cultural difference that set this corner of the kingdom apart in its fervent support for the king. This fervour earned Wales the title "nursery of the king's infantry".

The Civil War of the 1640s pitted the armies of the Long Parliament against those of Charles I in a bloody and destructive contest. The issues involved in the conflict were complex, but essentially revolved around mutual distrust, and a dispute over the location and nature of authority in church and state. These conflicts have fascinated historians from the moment they ended, and their interpretation and meaning have been fiercely contested.

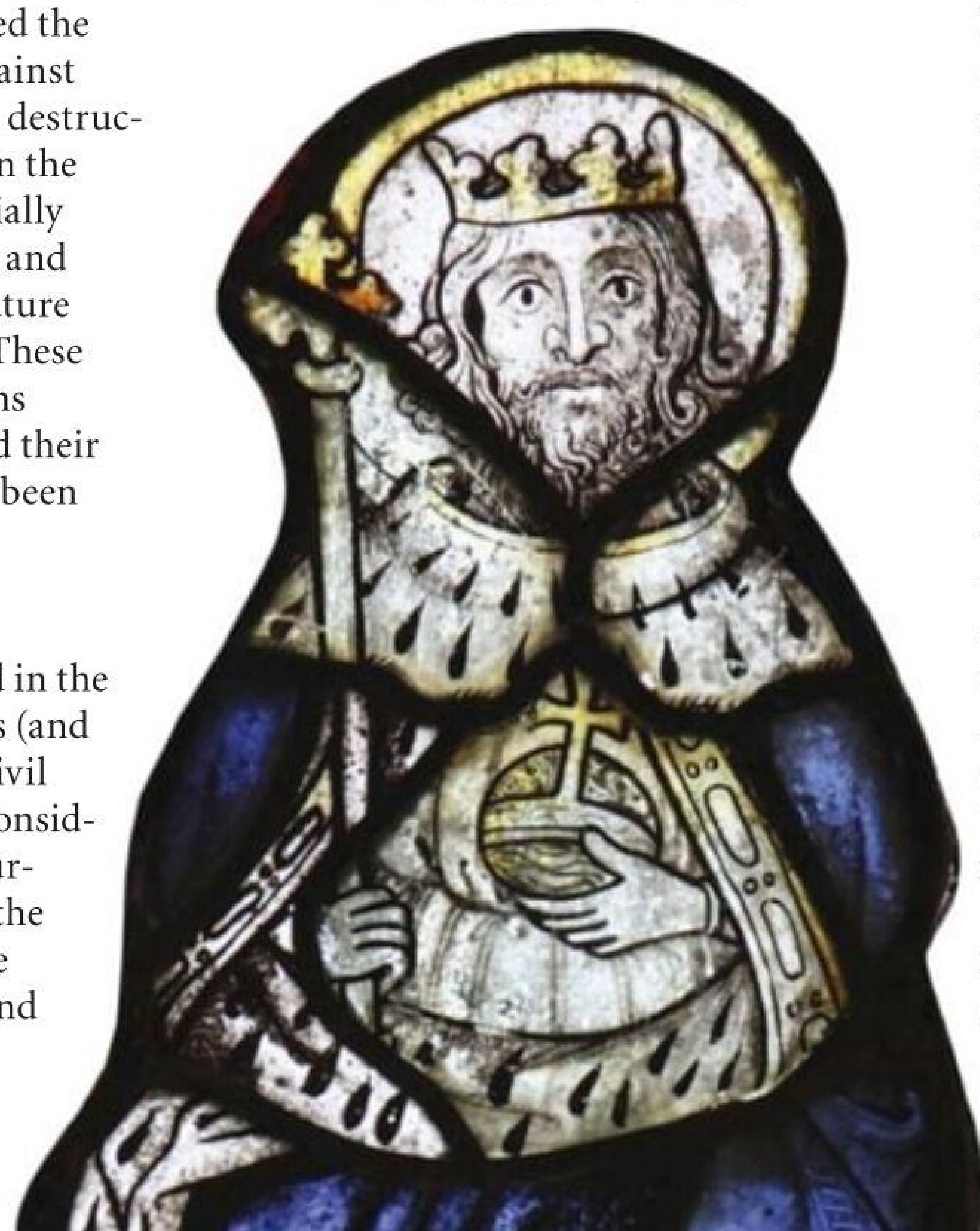
Multiple monarchies

Such divisions are partly reflected in the names given to the conflict. It was (and is) popularly called the English Civil War, but a recent trend towards considering its wider contexts has encouraged some to brand it the War of the Three Kingdoms, a title that more explicitly reflects events in Scotland and Ireland. Although this is a positive development in bringing the other constituents of Britain's 'multiple monarchy' more directly into the narrative, such a perspective leaves little space for the story of Wales in the 1640s. This helps to explain why Wales fails to make it into the indexes of many Civil War books to this day.

The Welsh saw themselves as the 'true Britons', heirs of the ancient inhabitants of the island

The breakdown in relations between King Charles I and his parliament was as pressing an issue in Wales as it was in England. Despite the language barrier between the two countries, political gossip and debate about the key points at issue circulated freely in Wales. Several commentators noted Wales's precocious support for Charles I, and its hostility to parliament. For example, in May 1642 the Venetian ambassador reported that "the people of the province of Wales have offered the king their services, beseeching him to go and live in that corner of the kingdom". A week later the diplomat described how "in the province of Wales the devotion of the people [to the king] is constantly receiving fresh confirmation".

Many Welsh royalists believed that King Cadwaladr (below) was an ancestor of Charles I



How do we explain such loyalty? Partly, it seems to have arisen from a Welsh culture that venerated Charles I as being descended from a line of ancient British kings – but this was Britishness with a distinctive Welsh flavour. The Welsh saw themselves as the 'true Britons', heirs of the ancient inhabitants of the island, and their loyalty to monarchy was cemented by the accession of the Tudors, who were cast as native princes of Wales and rulers of Welsh stock. The Stuarts took over this mantle of British kingship with little disruption.

A striking illustration of this kind of Welsh monarchism was seen when the Prince of Wales, the future Charles II, toured the Anglo-Welsh border in 1642. At a feast at Raglan Castle, home of the enormously wealthy Earl of Worcester, Charles was treated to an entertainment shot through with Welsh pride in their loyalty and British heritage. The prince was assured that: "It is the glory of the Britaines that we are the true remaining and only one people of this land, and we have alwayes been true in our affections to our king and countrey… We know no sun that can with the influence of royall beames cherish and warme our true British hearts, but the sun of our gracious sovereigne… In what true and ancient Britaines may serve you, you may command us to our uttermost strength, our lives and fortunes to be ready to assist you."

A very Welsh interpretation

Welsh royalism was bolstered by a particularly Welsh conception of the reformed church, which sat very uneasily with the reforming noises coming out of the parliamentary-Puritan phalanx. The Puritan emphasis on religious reform, which drove a good deal of the opposition to Charles I in England and Scotland, had little resonance in Wales. Here the Reformation had been a project intimately connected to Welsh cultural ideals: the Bible and Book of Common Prayer were translated into Welsh under Elizabeth I, while Protestantism had been interpreted as the recovery of the pristine original faith of the Britons, forebears of the Welsh. As a result, the Welsh take on theology and church government seems to have been conservative and respectful of the monarch's pre-eminence.

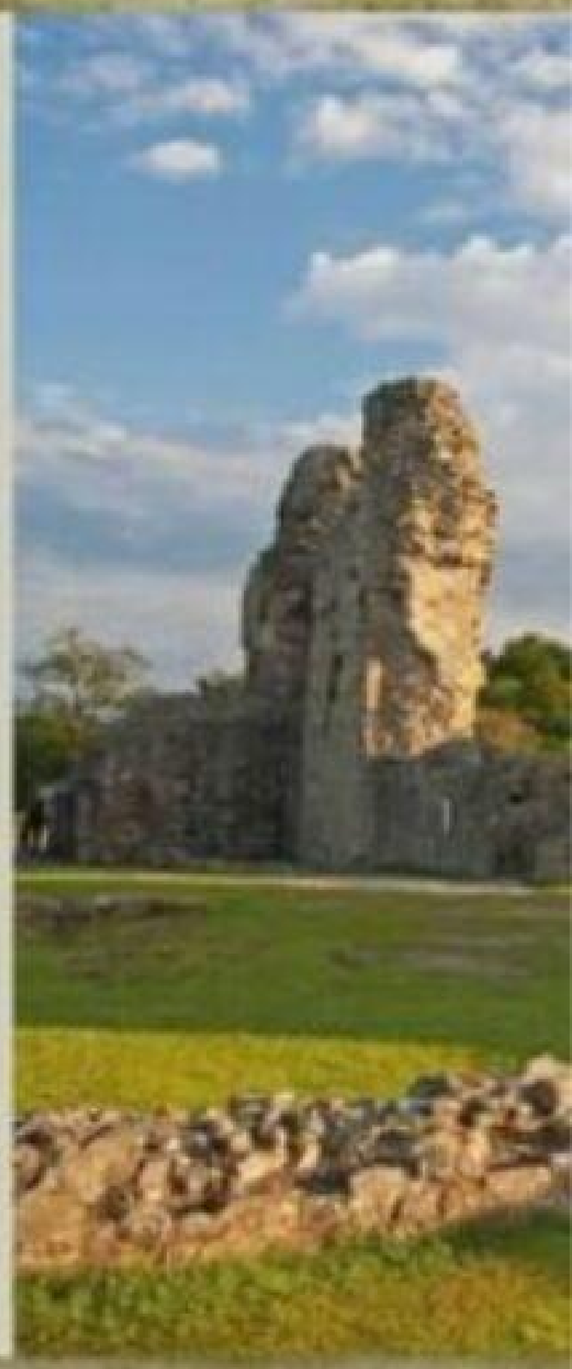
Only one of Wales's 27 representatives in the Long Parliament can be identified as a supporter of Puritan reform. Rather

Fortified flashpoints

When the Civil War came to Wales in the 1640s, much of the fighting was centred around the country's many castles

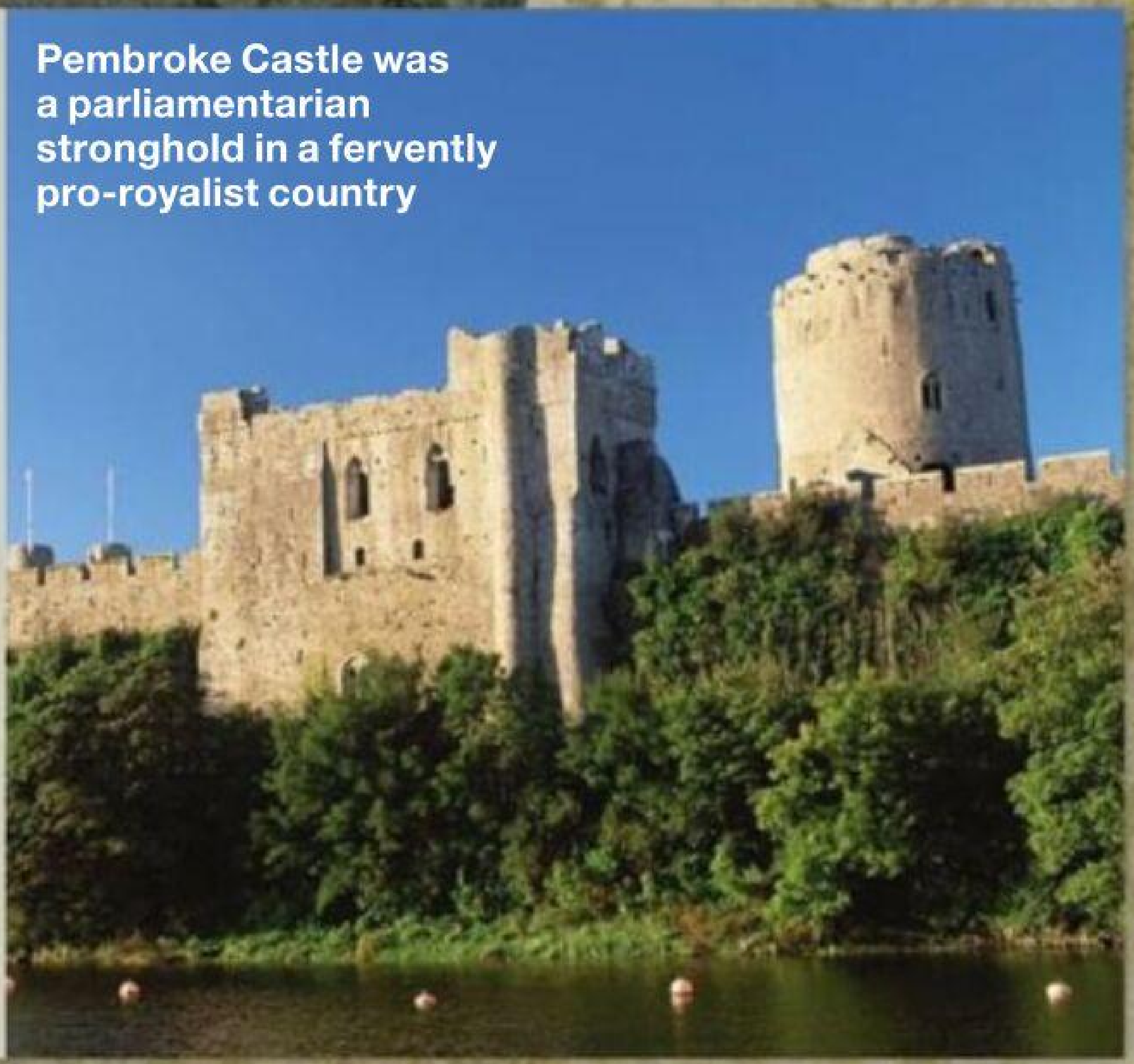
Montgomery Castle ▶

A gateway to mid-Wales, Montgomery Castle was held nominally for the king by the writer, diplomat and philosopher Edward, Baron Herbert of Cherbury. Its fall to Sir Thomas Myddelton in September 1644 paved the way for the parliamentarian defeat of mid and north Wales. Herbert surrendered the castle upon condition that the troops would not touch his precious library.

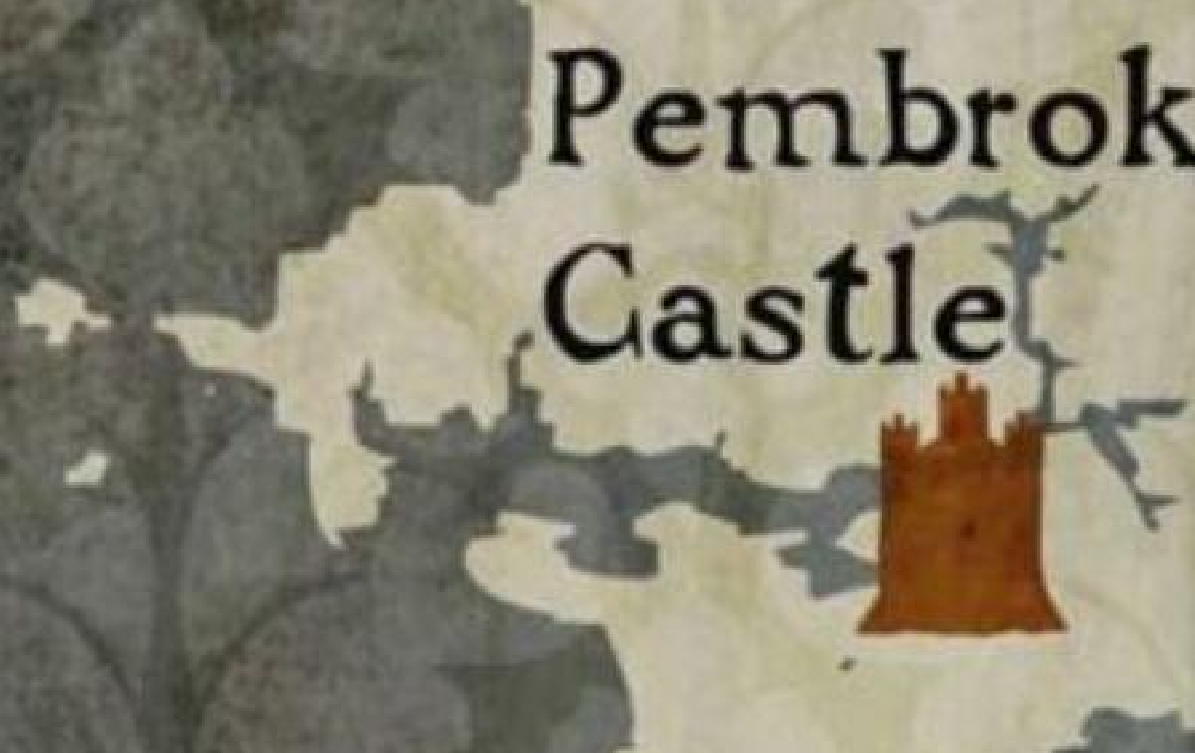


▼ Pembroke Castle

This was one of the few places in Wales to declare for parliament during the first phase of the Civil War under its merchant mayor, John Poyer. Royalists besieged the castle on several occasions but it never fell. Poyer, disgruntled with his treatment at the hands of the victorious parliament, rose against his former allies in 1648. He surrendered to Cromwell's forces on 11 July 1648. Poyer was one of three rebels sentenced to death, but it was ruled that only one should die. A child picked the name of the unlucky individual: Poyer. He was shot at Covent Garden on 25 April 1649.



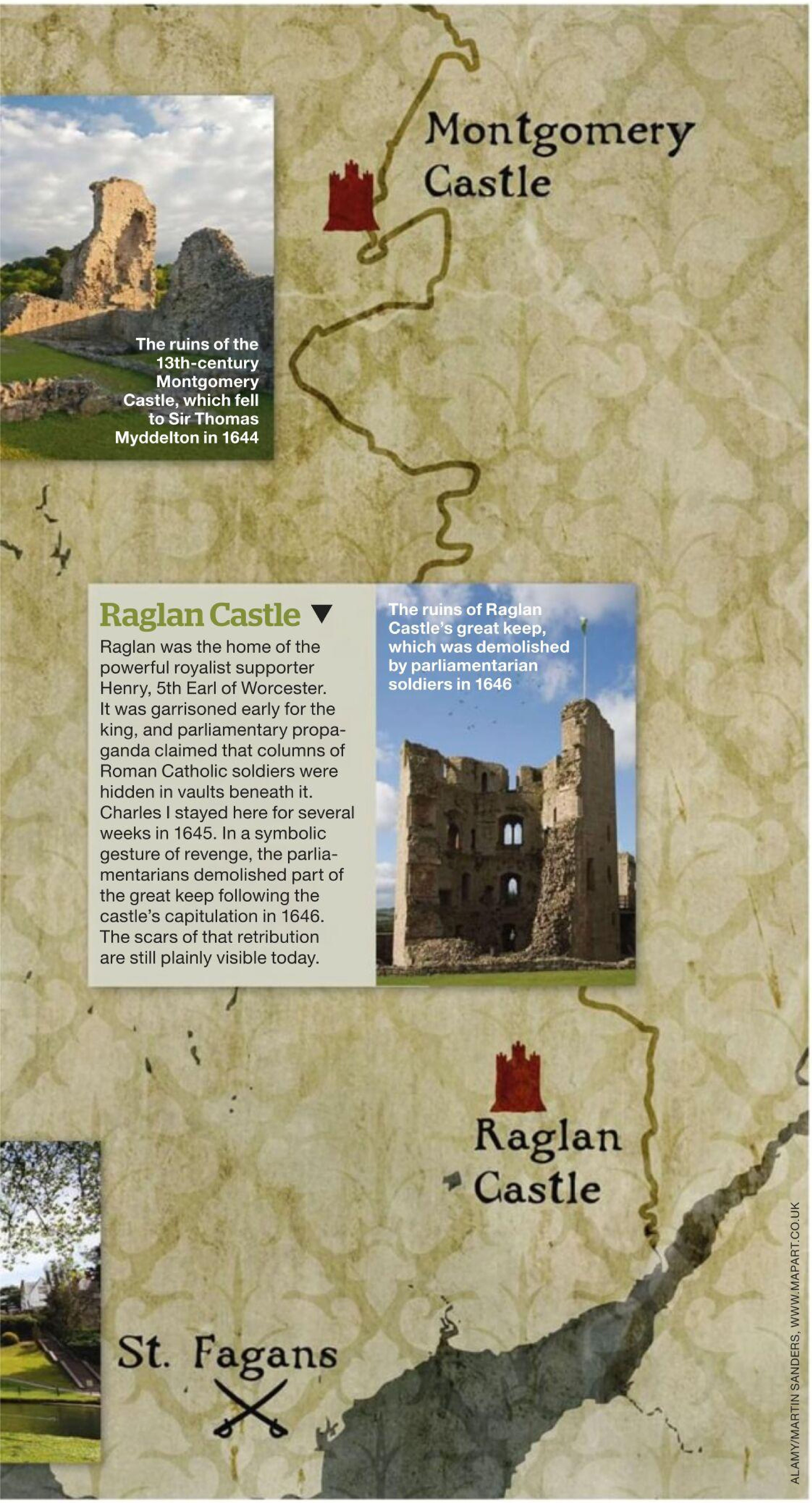
Pembroke Castle was a parliamentarian stronghold in a fervently pro-royalist country



St Fagans ▶

This is the site of the largest pitched battle on Welsh soil during the Civil War. Former parliamentarian Rowland Laugharne led around 8,000 royalist rebels. Parliament's much smaller but better-trained force of around 3,000 men was arrayed behind Colonel Thomas Horton. The outcome was a crushing defeat for the royalists and the effective collapse of their cause in south Wales. St Fagans is now the site of the Welsh National Museum of History.

The gardens at St Fagans, which witnessed a crushing defeat of royalist forces in 1648



The ruins of the 13th-century Montgomery Castle, which fell to Sir Thomas Myddelton in 1644

Raglan Castle ▼

Raglan was the home of the powerful royalist supporter Henry, 5th Earl of Worcester. It was garrisoned early for the king, and parliamentary propaganda claimed that columns of Roman Catholic soldiers were hidden in vaults beneath it. Charles I stayed here for several weeks in 1645. In a symbolic gesture of revenge, the parliamentarians demolished part of the great keep following the castle's capitulation in 1646. The scars of that retribution are still plainly visible today.

The ruins of Raglan Castle's great keep, which was demolished by parliamentarian soldiers in 1646

ALAMY/MARTIN SANDERS, WWW.MAPART.CO.UK

Perhaps five per cent of the male Welsh population had joined the king's forces by the end of the year

more representative of the country's religious attitudes was a petition presented to the Commons on 5 March 1642. It was claimed that 30,000 people from the six counties of north Wales endorsed the petition – individuals who asserted their position to be "the unanimous and undivided request and vote of this whole country".

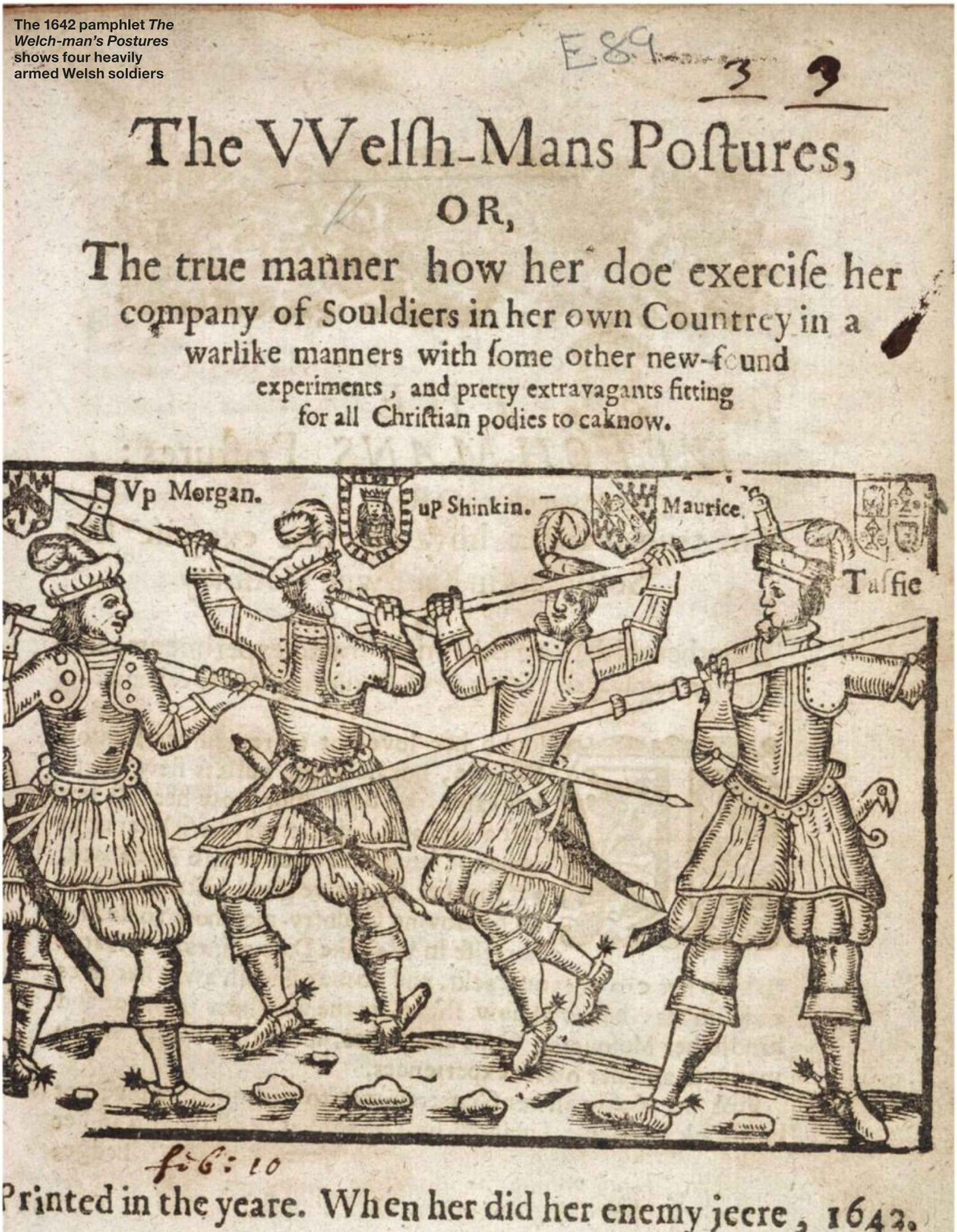
The petition argued strongly against the Puritan proposal to abolish government by bishops in the church (episcopacy). The Welsh conformists maintained that the "mere report" of such alterations had caused them unease. The petitioners stressed the 'British' dimension of episcopacy and articulated a particular sense of Welsh pride and fidelity in the church. The petition was surmounted with three feathers and the legend 'Ich Dien' ('I serve') – the emblem of the Prince of Wales, whose initials were also included – which served to further underscore a proclamation of a distinctive Welshness.

Religious status quo

The document helps to illustrate how Charles's clear commitment to resisting religious reform and defending the status quo in the church encouraged Welsh support for his cause. These sentiments were evidently to the fore in a Welsh praise poem offered during the Civil War to a north Walian colonel, who was said to be fighting for the king in order to protect Wales from injustice and to defend his country and the true faith.

These positive impulses to support the king in Wales were fortified by a form of negative campaigning associated with the nascent parliamentary coalition, when a series of satirical pamphlets about the Welsh emerged from London presses between late 1641 and early 1643. These drew on established stereotypes to ridicule and vilify the Welsh as ignorant, duplicitous and misguided.

Another petition to parliament suggests how such publications influenced political



The 1642 pamphlet *The Welch-man's Postures* shows four heavily armed Welsh soldiers

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The VVelſh-Mans Poſtures,

OR,

The true manner how her doe exerciſe her company of Souldiers in her own Countrey in a warlike manners with ſome other new-found experiments, and pretty extravagants fitting for all Chriſtian podies to caknow.

Vp Morgan.
up Shinkin.
Maurice.
Taſfie

feb: 10

Printed in the yeare. When her did her enemy jeere, 1642.

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opinion in Wales. The petition was presented on 12 February 1642 in the name of "many hundred thousands within the thirteene shires of Wales". It reflected on the disturbing trend towards disparaging the Welsh, and described how they were "disrespected and shamefully derided with ludibrious contempt more than any other countrey whatsoever".

The petition demanded the suppression of "this epidemicall derision of us," which was seen as "nothing else but a scorning detestation to our known fidelity". The fidelity in question was clearly Welsh affection for the king rather than for parliament.

It is difficult to assess the degree to which such evidence reflects the political sympathies of the ordinary man or woman in Wales at that time. However, contemporaries agreed that most of Wales was passionately pro-royalist from early in the political and military conflict. An exception lay in parts of Pembrokeshire, where the population showed some inclination to support parliament.

Perhaps ethnicity and language had something to do with political allegiances here. Certainly, contemporaries were sometimes reluctant to see Pembrokeshire as truly part of Wales – in no small measure because it was not royalist. One author from the county wrote in 1646 that: "It was… commonly spoken by the best sort of gentlemen that the Welsh were the true Brittaines, and his Majestyes best and only orthodox subjects, and Pembrookshire for the most part Saxons and bastards."

Fighting for the king

Prominent Welsh gentlemen such as Sir Nicholas Kemeys were active in raising troops for the army that fought for the king at the battle of Edgehill in October 1642. Some 10,000 individuals – perhaps five per cent of the male Welsh population – had joined the king's forces by the end of the year. Initially, their fighting was mostly done outside Wales.

However, as parliament gained the upper hand militarily in England, so the war increasingly penetrated into royalist Wales, often in the form of sieges of the many castles dotting its landscape. Notable here was the campaign of a rare beast – a Welsh parliamentarian general, Sir Thomas Myddelton, who established a parliamentary enclave with an invasion of mid-Wales in 1644–45. The royalist cause collapsed in England and Wales in 1645–46, and it was in Wales that the final redoubt of royalism was to be found – the garrison at Harlech being the last in Charles's southern kingdom to surrender, on 16 March 1647.

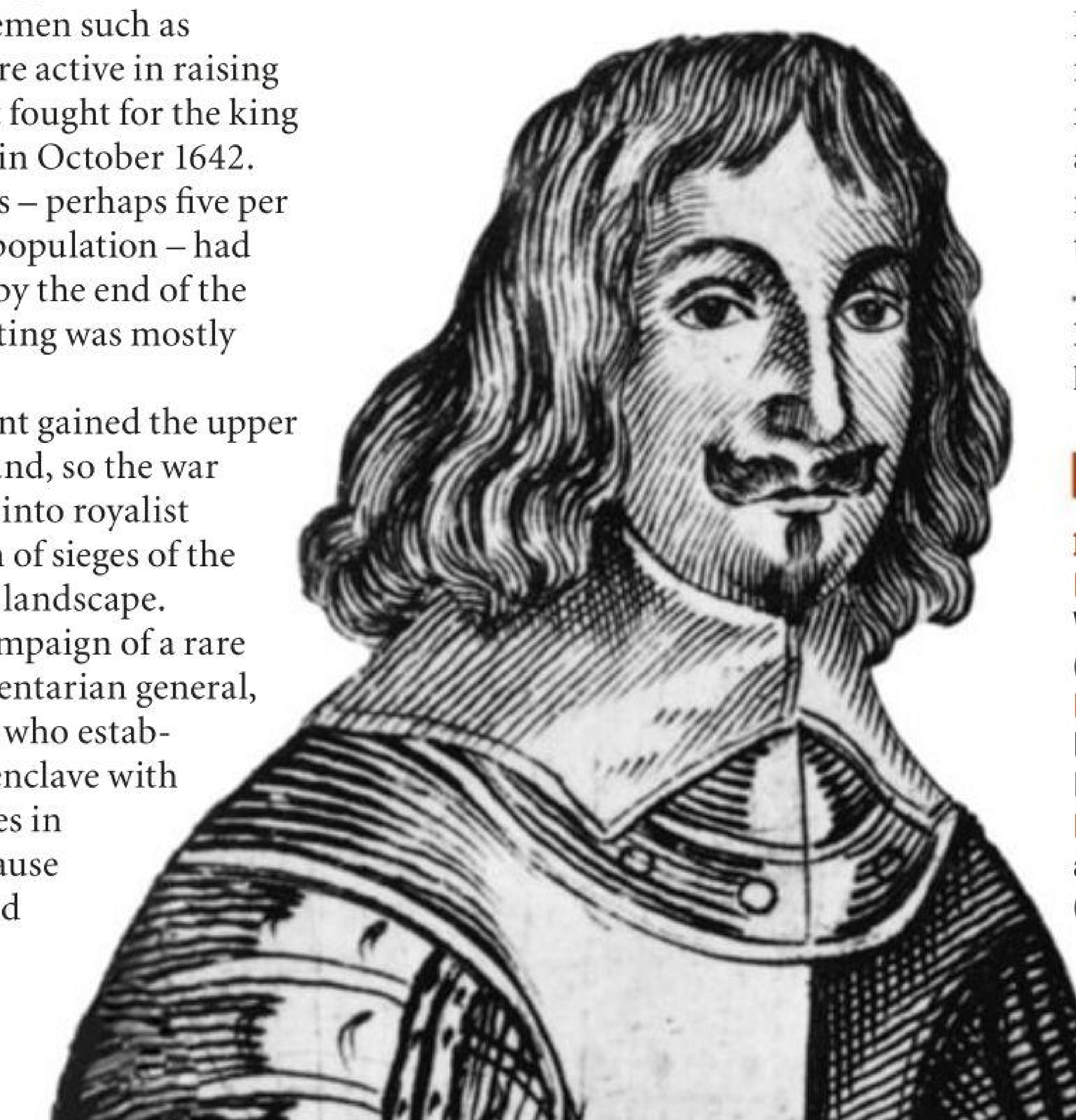
Oliver Cromwell ruminated on how the Welsh were but a "seduced, ignorant people"

Given the commitment the Welsh showed to their king during the conflict, it is perhaps unsurprising that Wales was one of the key flashpoints of the so-called Second Civil War of 1648. Pro-royalist risings occurred in both north and south Wales, and Kemeys' death was part of this last throw of the royalist dice in Wales.

Contemporaries recognised the country's allegiance to the king, and one royalist newspaper at the time observed that: "Loyalty run[s] so in a bloud amongst the Welsh that it will be in vaine [for parliament] to attempt this last refuge of monarchy, which Providence seemes to have given in earnest for the restitution of the whole."

This was a wishful fantasy rather than practical politics, however, and the New Model Army crushed the 1648 risings.

"A rare beast": Sir Thomas Myddelton, who established a parliamentary enclave in mid-Wales in 1644–45



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The rebellious Welsh forces suffered a devastating defeat at the battle of St Fagans in Glamorgan, an engagement involving around 11,000 men. Cromwell helped to suppress the last remnants of resistance at Pembroke Castle, ruminating on how the Welsh were but a "seduced, ignorant people".

Religious re-education

Cromwell was referring to an ignorance of a particular kind – a lack of knowledge about the word of God and the true reformed message. To remedy the ingrained royalism of the Welsh, parliamentary propagandists argued that a radical form of religious re-education and reformation had to be undertaken in Wales. Cromwell himself was sympathetic to these calls, and he supported a state-sponsored initiative to bring this about: the Commission for the Propagation of the Gospel in Wales, which was established in February 1650.

Although it survived only to 1653, the commission empowered enclaves of Puritanism in Wales, and helped establish durable communities of religious nonconformity and political radicalism. These survived beyond the Restoration and would come to be seen as the foundation of a dissenting tradition so important in the history of modern Wales.

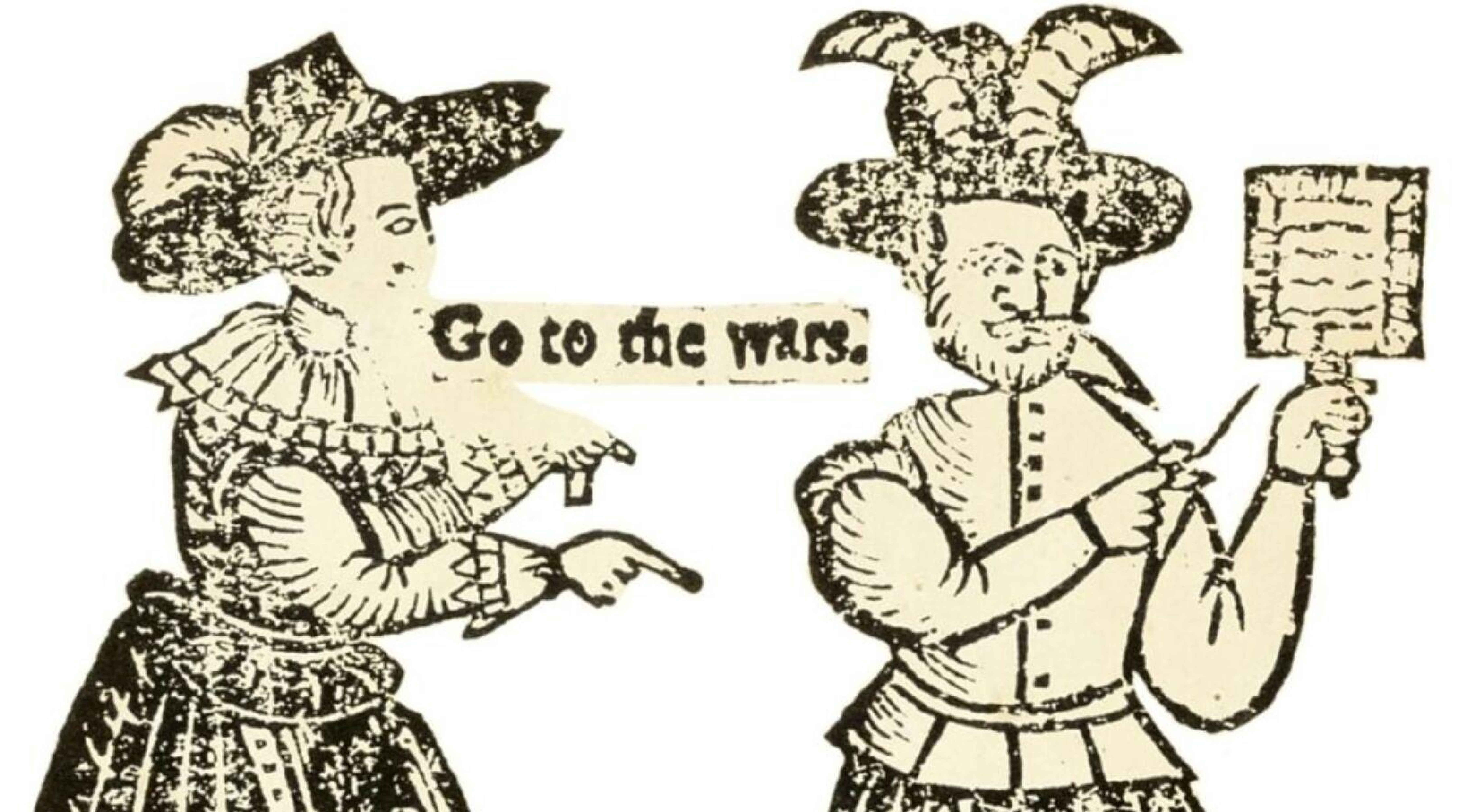
But such dissenters remained the exception rather than the rule, and the restoration of Charles II in 1660 was a time of rejoicing in Wales. This was in part because it was believed he would restore the "Antient Brittish church… to her primitive splendor," but also because he was acknowledged as having descended from King Cadwaladr, the last king of the ancient Britons. This sense of legitimacy deriving from British blood was important in motivating the Welsh to support Charles I, and it also saw them triumphing in the return of his son, the man who "brought the bones of Cadwaladr home". H

Lloyd Bowen is reader in early modern and Welsh history at Cardiff University

DISCOVER MORE

BOOK

- ▶ **A Nation Under Siege: The Civil War in Wales, 1642–48** by Peter Gaunt (HMSO, 1991)
- ▶ **Soldiers and Strangers: An Ethnic History of the English Civil War** by Mark Stoyle (Yale, 2005)
- ▶ **The Civil Wars Experienced: Britain and Ireland, 1638–61** by Martyn Bennett (Routledge, 2000)


Go to the wars.

An illustration from the 1642 pamphlet *The Resolution of the Women of London to the Parliament* shows a wife directing her husband to "Go to the wars"

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THE HOME FRONT

Faced with unfamiliar challenges during the Civil War, women were forced to take on new roles – from defending family homes to battling bureaucracy. **Anne Laurence** explores the travails of a range of women struggling to make ends meet in a time of conflict

As February 1644 drew to a close, the situation at Lathom looked dire. The stone castle known as Lathom House, family seat of the Earl of Derby and the last royalist stronghold in Lancashire, was surrounded by some 2,000 parliamentarian troops, and was itself garrisoned with perhaps only 300 men. When the Roundheads under renowned commander Sir Thomas Fairfax arrived, the earl was away on the Isle of Man, leaving his wife Charlotte, Countess of Derby, to lead its defence.

But lead it she did – much to the chagrin of her parliamentarian foe. For three months she imperiously repelled both diplomatic and military attempts to take the castle, instead inflicting losses on the besieging Roundheads till the arrival of general Prince Rupert on 27 May relieved the besieged royalists.

The countess's brave defence of Lathom, along with that of Herefordshire parliamentarian bastion Brampton Bryan by Brilliana Harley, and of royalist-owned Wardour Castle in Wiltshire by Lady Blanche Arundell, hit the headlines in the Civil War newsbooks. Each of these women endured sieges of weeks in defence of her husband's home. The royalist newsbook *Mercurius Aulicus* rejoiced in the Countess of Derby's heroism, running regular stories about the siege as it entered its 10th, 13th and finally 18th week, describing her as "the incomparable Countess of Derby" and keeping a tally of the artillery and colours her men had captured from the enemy.

Alternative histories

These examples made the news because they showed women taking on men's roles. Historians concerned with the passage of the war often write as if most women and children, except for the defenders of castles, went into a deep sleep between 1642 and 1649. Political historians have, it's true, taken an interest in women's participation in radical political and religious movements: Leveller women petitioners, women preaching, and the claims for sexual freedom of the Ranters. But the disruption affected everyone, especially in frontier areas between royalist and parliamentarian-held districts. An alternative history of the Civil War reveals the defence of their livelihoods by women and men of all social classes.

How did women make ends meet when troops seized or destroyed crops and livestock during marches, or when fathers, husbands and sons essential to the livelihood of the household were away with the armies for long periods?

Following battles and skirmishes, women took wounded soldiers into their houses and nursed them

True, some women were caught up in the violence. The brutal murder of 150 royalist camp followers by parliamentarians at the battle of Naseby is often cited, though it was a rare episode, chiefly because few armies had camp followers. The killers' justification was that the women were Irish, and the Irish had been responsible in 1641 for the slaughter of many Protestants in Ireland. It mattered little that many of them were probably the wives of Protestant settlers in Ireland, recruited to serve in the royalist army in England.

In fact, great set-piece battles involving thousands of troops were comparatively rare occurrences. A more common experience was of fighting on a much smaller scale – between scores of men rather than thousands – and was spasmodic and local. All over the country, especially in the English Midlands, were garrisons generally based on older fortified houses, manned by small units of soldiers drawn from the surrounding area, who ventured out on skirmishing expeditions. Such forays certainly impacted on women. Margery Page, for example, had her coach horses seized and 20 horses billeted at her house in Harrow, and all of her winter provisions for people, horses and cattle were consumed. Elsewhere, the raid on Elizabeth Giles's farm was "to the utter disabling of them to continue tillage and husbandry".

Women provided goods and services for these garrisons, too. The garrison at Great Chalfield in Wiltshire paid women as spies and messengers, for laundry and for repairs to clothing. Following battles and skirmishes, women took wounded soldiers into their houses and nursed them; probably as devastating as battle injuries were the outbreaks of typhus and plague among the soldiers. Mary Burd submitted a petition in 1644 to be paid for looking after one sick soldier, asking for "what you shall think good"; she received 10 shillings. Mrs Judith Massey from Epworth, Lincolnshire evidently made a business of looking after sick soldiers, and was paid £10 for caring for 150 soldiers after the battle of Marston Moor in July 1644. Twelve women were paid 8d per day to nurse the soldiers in the hospitals around the royalist headquarters at Oxford. Another sometime nurse, Elizabeth Alkin, seems to have combined her caring work with spying for the parliamentarians, uncovering printers who produced royalist newsbooks.

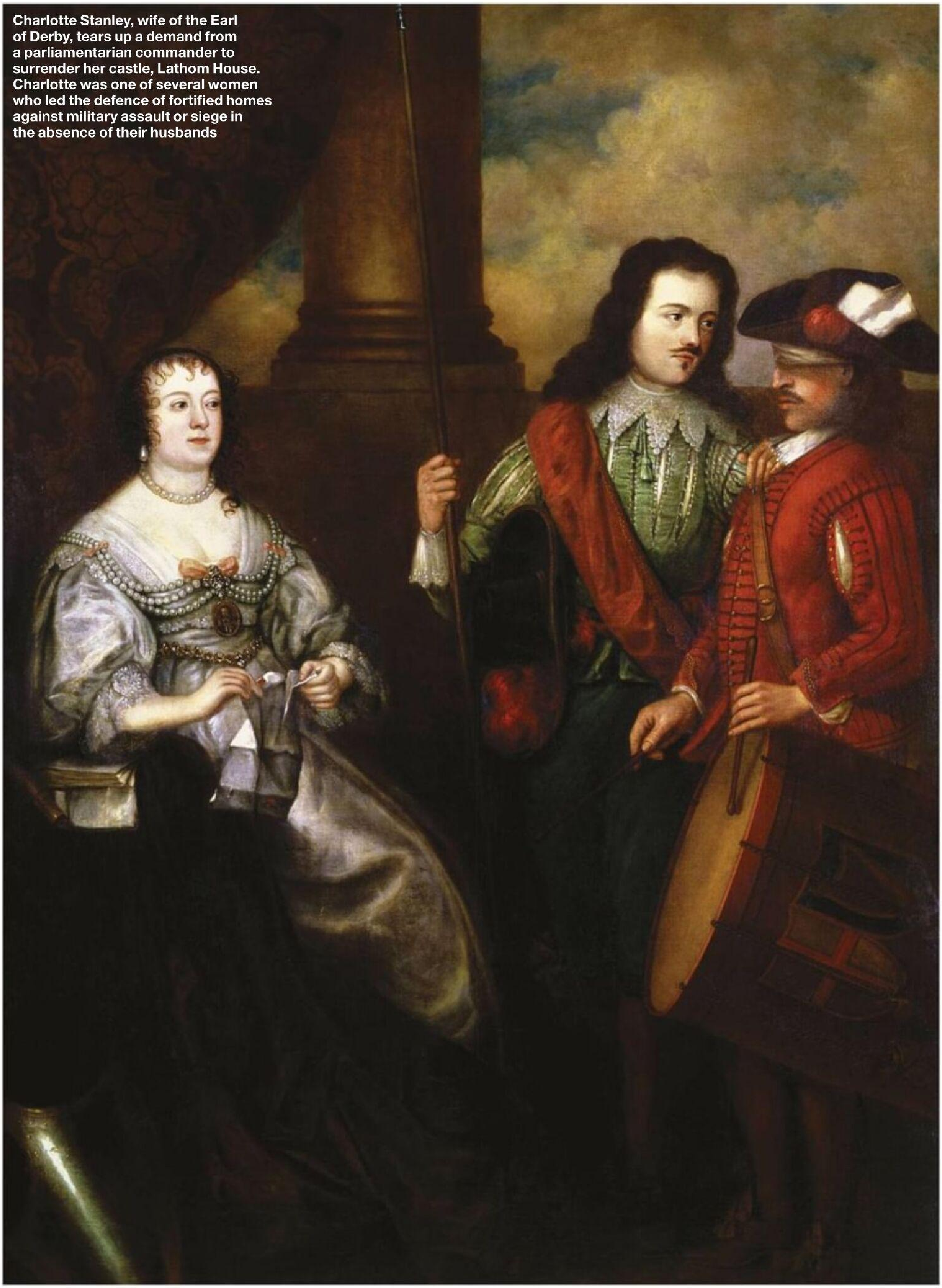
Balancing the books

In men's absence, women had to manage on their own. Women left in charge of landed estates had to administer them in their husbands' absences; for example, Isabella Twysden looked after her moderate royalist husband's property in Kent while he was under house arrest in London. He wrote in his journal that: "This year [1645], my dear wife looking after my business, I had the liberty of following my studies," comprising a comparison of the laws of Henry I with Saxon and Norman law.

Parliament tried to fund the military effort with property confiscated from delinquents (adherents of the king) and recusants (Roman Catholics), but they also understood that, though it was all very well to take away a man's property, his family still needed support. Wives or daughters of men whose land and buildings had been confiscated could petition for the payment of one-fifth of the value of the property's income for their own support.

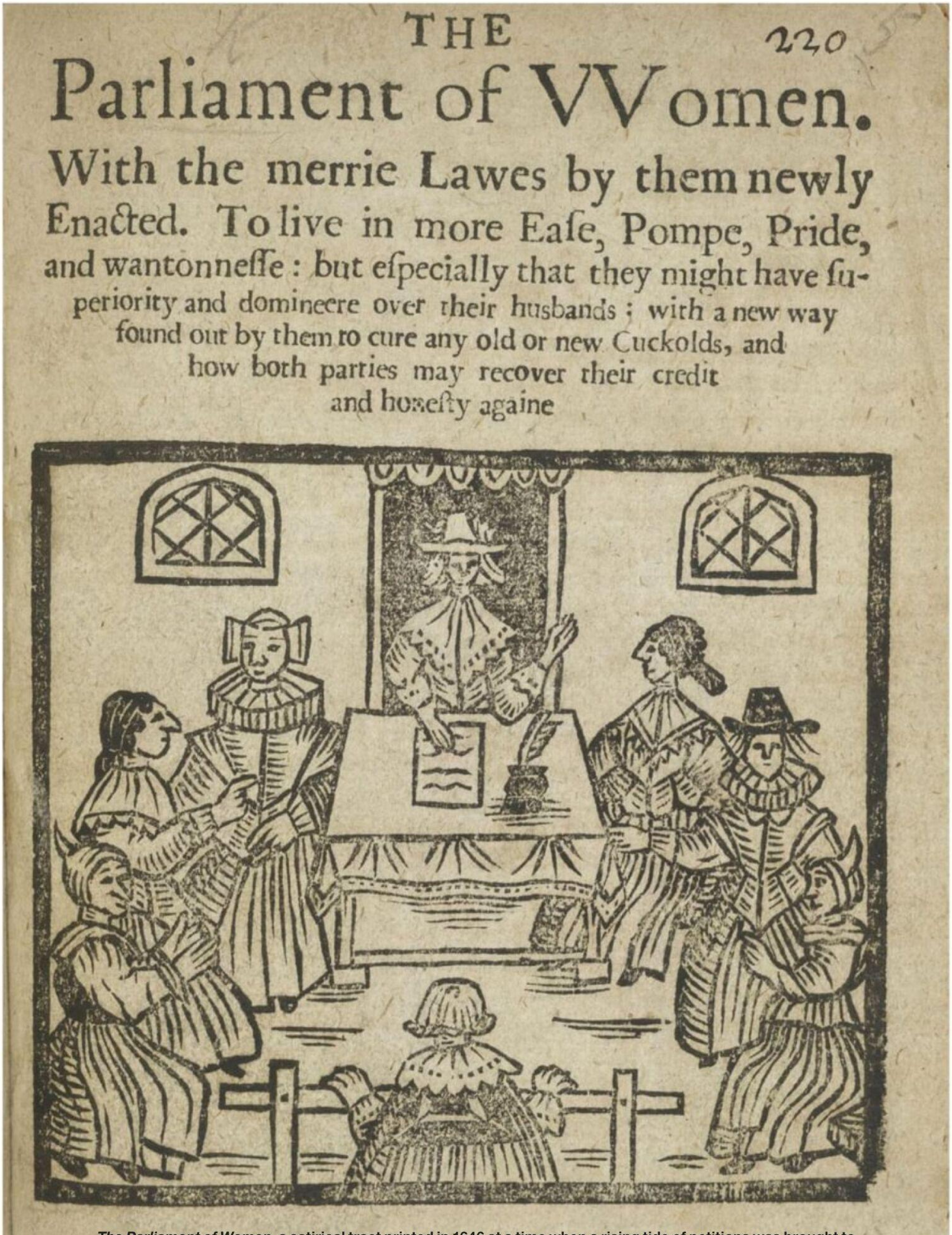
Isabella Twysden travelled between Kent and London, where her royalist husband was confined and where she attended committee meetings in the House of Commons to claim that one-fifth of her husband's income. Countess Rivers – unusually, a peeress in her own right, and lady of the bedchamber to Charles I's wife Henrietta Maria – petitioned the House of Lords in 1645 on the grounds that her property had been seized by the Parliamentary Committee for Essex when it had been agreed that peers' property should only be assessed by other peers. Mary Verney, writing to her husband Sir Ralph in France in 1646, told him that "they say we must petition the committees in both houses after we have made all the friends that possibly we can."

The seizure of property also meant the loss of money to fund dowries for daughters at the time of their marriage, or to make dower payments (or jointures – settlements of money or property) for widows for their



Charlotte Stanley, wife of the Earl of Derby, tears up a demand from a parliamentarian commander to surrender her castle, Lathom House. Charlotte was one of several women who led the defence of fortified homes against military assault or siege in the absence of their husbands

BRIDGEMAN



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THE
Parliament of VVomen.
With the merrie Lawes by them newly
Enacted. To live in more Eaſe, Pompe, Pride,
and wantonneſſe: but eſpecially that they might have ſuperiority and domineere over their husbands; with a new way
found out by them to cure any old or new Cuckolds, and
how both parties may recover their credit
and honeſty againe

The Parliament of Women, a satirical tract printed in 1646 at a time when a rising tide of petitions was brought to parliament by women. Many wives whose husbands had been killed, injured or imprisoned, or whose property had been confiscated, were forced into public life, negotiating with political and military authorities to claim restitution

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support after their husbands' deaths. In principle, debts had to be honoured when property was confiscated, and dowries were debts enforceable at law. In practice, it could be difficult to recover them, especially because the Court of Chancery, which adjudicated such matters, was in abeyance for some years.

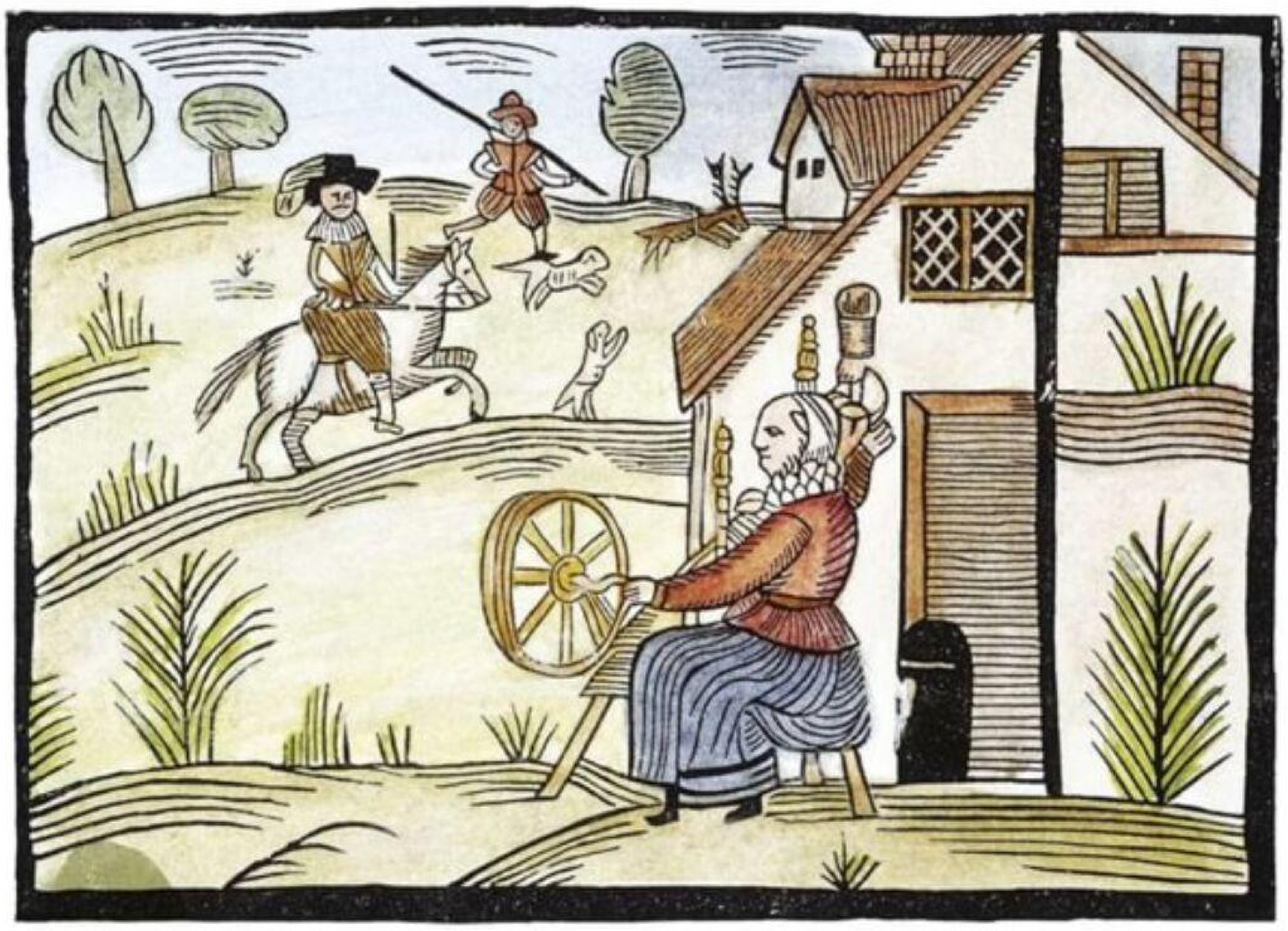
The widowed Mrs Sence Wheatley had to petition for her husband's legacy of £600 in addition to the third of her husband's estate to which she was entitled by custom. Dame Katherine Bromley, widow of Sir Thomas Bromley, had to petition for the payment of her jointure since "your petitioner is left destitute of all means and livelihood or subsistence". And Margery Page had received nothing of her jointure three months after her husband's death, after her house was invaded by "divers unknown persons of mean condition".

Claiming money was an activity that occupied many women, and which projected them into a world of letter-writing, petitioning and bureaucracy to which few had previously been exposed. Some were wealthy landowners, some were the families of clergymen, but others were poor women whose farms had been raided, or whose husbands were left unpaid in the armies or had been killed or injured.

Few men served for long periods continuously in armies, but we know from the agitation in the parliamentary army in 1647 that payments to serving soldiers had fallen into considerable arrears. There had already been petitions and demonstrations about this. In October 1645, the widow of one Major Backhouse was granted £100 on her petition to the House of Commons for the payment of his arrears. In January 1646, widows of soldiers and creditors of parliament presented a petition "crying and importuning for satisfaction of moneys due to them". The pregnant Lucretia Barkley petitioned for the payment of the arrears due to her husband in 1645, she being "far from her native country Poland where all her friends are".

Widowed and wanting

A particularly hard-hit group of supplicants comprised the families of men maimed or killed, who petitioned for pay arrears due to their husbands as well as for pensions. In October 1645, 2,000 "maimed and wounded soldiers and widows" presented a petition to the House of Commons protesting their hardship. Parliament agreed that there should be a special church collection for them. The persistent demands for the payments of pensions and arrears suggest that parliament had not made sufficient provision for the welfare of wounded troops and the families of wounded and dead soldiers.



A country housewife spins outside her cottage in a mid-17th-century woodcut. Many rural women struggled to manage after troops seized or destroyed crops and livestock

BRIDGEMAN

For most women, the war was a period of attempting, in more trying circumstances than usual, to make ends meet

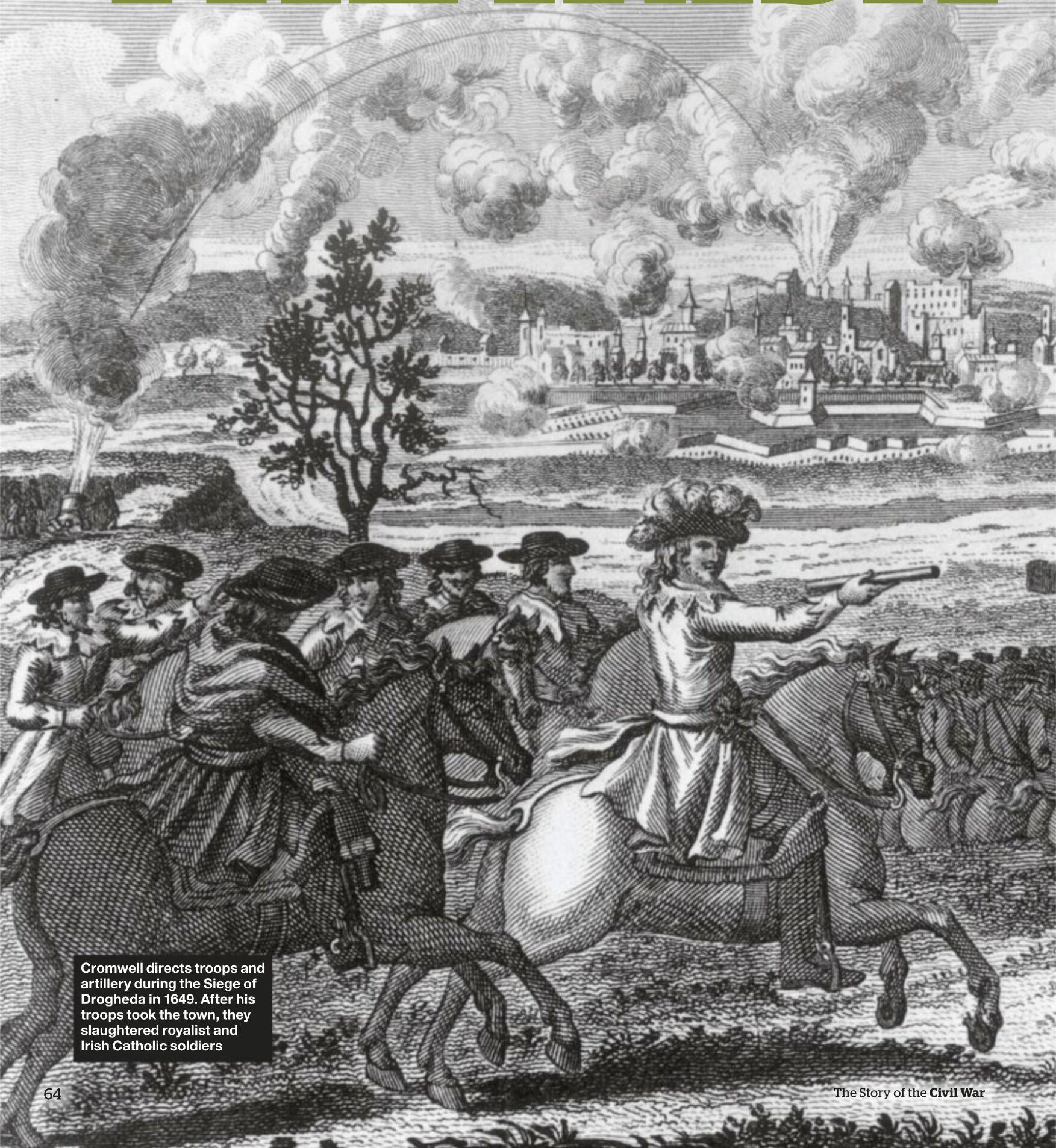
Some petitions referred to hardships suffered by opponents of the king before the war. Mrs Susannah Bastwick, whose husband Dr John Bastwick had been tortured and imprisoned in 1637, was still petitioning parliament in 1654 for the payment of compensation for, among other things, her jointure. "She humbly intreats you to… consider how unjustly he was sentenced [and]… was utterly undone… and thereby your petitioner is made exceeding miserable, and now in the winter of her age is comfortless, helpless… and reduced to such want and poverty, that… she and her poor children are like inevitably to perish." Finally, in 1657 she was granted lands in Ireland – only for them to be confiscated by Charles II.

Another group of petitioners comprised the wives and families of royalist and Anglican clergymen who had been ejected from their parishes for preaching in favour of the king and for continuing to use the Anglican Book of Common Prayer. Mrs Everall Clare, wife of the former rector of Ickenham in Middlesex, petitioned for the payment of one-fifth of the value of her husband's rectory to support herself and her children. Many clergymen's wives' petitions referred to failure of a replacement clergyman to honour his obligations to them. Jane Wemes said that she and her three children had not been paid for two years, and that "she is constrained to thrust herself upon the charities of her friends for subsistence". Clergy wives had also to deal with their husbands' loss of status: such men had effectively been defrocked.

The war engendered rare cases of 'Polly Olivers' – women who joined the armies disguised as men – and saw many instances in which women were clearly taking on their absent husbands' businesses. However, for most women the war was a period of attempting, in more trying circumstances than usual, to make ends meet. An unusually large number of women were thrust into the public sphere, forced to demand subsistence payments for their families, whether for arrears of pay, pensions, the repayment of debts, or other awards of money. Many of them used scribes to write their petitions, but the needs of the time forced them into a new world of engagement with the authorities. H

Anne Laurence is emeritus professor of history at the Open University, and author of *Women in England 1500–1760: A Social History* (Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 2005)

THE IRISH



Cromwell directs troops and artillery during the Siege of Drogheda in 1649. After his troops took the town, they slaughtered royalist and Irish Catholic soldiers

QUESTION

Cromwell's campaign in Ireland was marred by heavy losses and brutality against Irish soldiers and, reputedly, civilians – yet ultimately, as **Martyn Bennett** explains, it enhanced his standing in England

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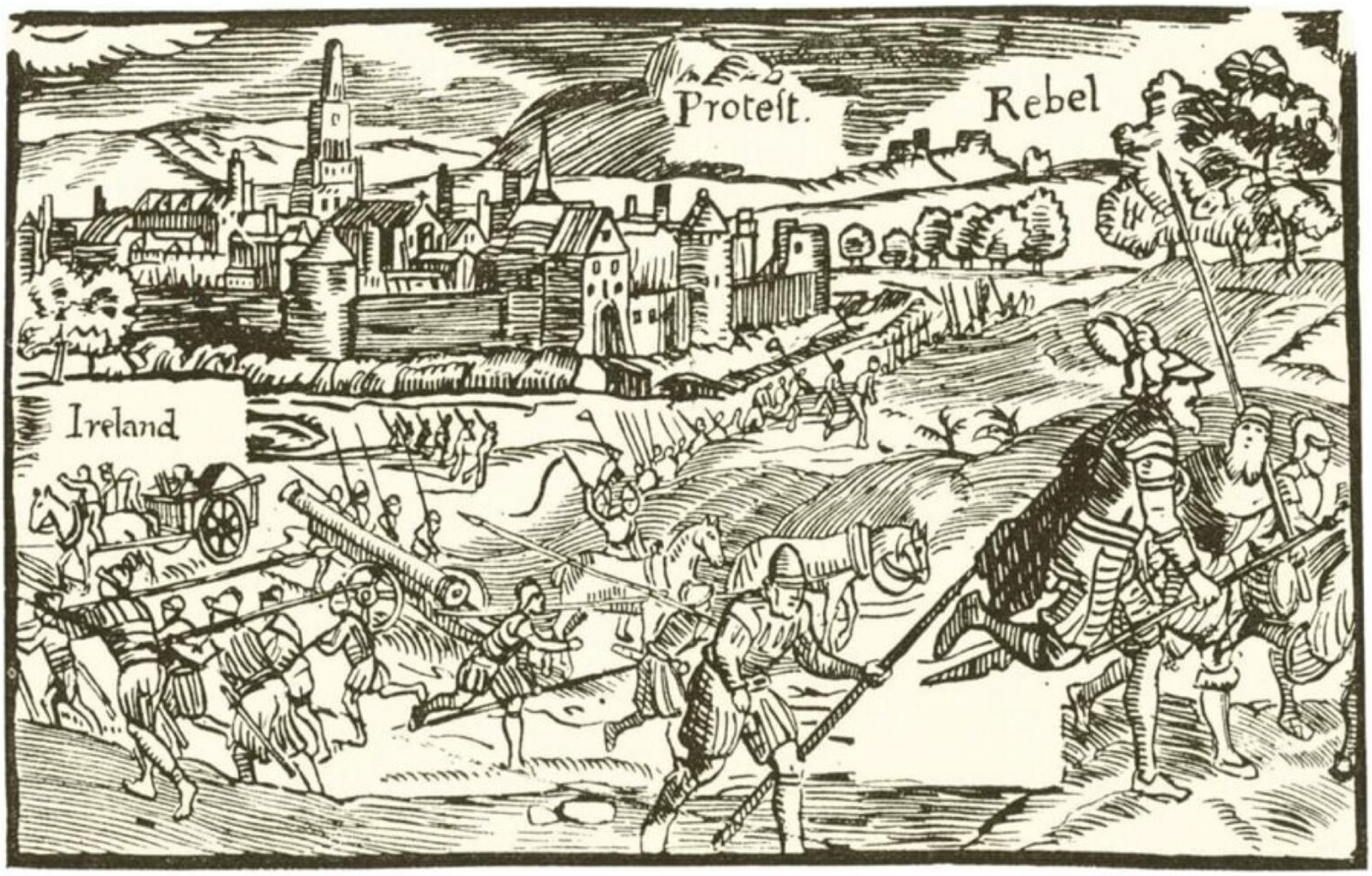


A 19th-century engraving depicts the taking of Artane Castle near Dublin, in 1641. The castle was garrisoned by the Roman Catholic gentry at the start of the Irish rebellion, along with other fortifications

BRIDGEMAN

Oliver Cromwell's generalship was tested to the limits in Ireland, a country that had been brought increasingly under the control of the English crown since 1541. Here he experienced victory, disappointment and defeat. Abroad for the first time in his life, he found himself in a country with a religious ethos that challenged even his broad tolerance, and where his lasting reputation suffered its most damaging stain as a result of his troops' actions at two bloody sieges. In many ways, the presence of Cromwell distorts our view of Ireland's role in the clashes of the mid-17th century, giving a focus that does little to explain the complexity of the conflict there – arguably the longest-lasting of the Civil War sequence.

On the night of 22 October 1641, a rising erupted across the northern Irish province of Ulster, plotted by disgruntled native Irish gentry and aristocrats who had been steadily forced out of parliament and legitimate politics by the Protestant polity. Fortifications were seized – some by violence, some with stealth and trickery – though in the capital, Dublin, plans to take the castle were betrayed and the seat of government was saved. Somehow, though the Catholic church had enjoyed a steady resurgence over the previous 30 years, the administration was caught unawares. By the end of 1641, the Catholic Irish had allied with the old Catholic settler families. In the meantime, the Edinburgh and Westminster governments had begun to raise forces and finances to pay for the re-establishment of colonial control.

The rising spreads

As the rebellion spread across the whole of Ireland, its nature changed. In addition to initial attempts to seize control of fortresses and government buildings, Irish Catholics seized property and drove from their land the more-recent settlers – descendants of English and Scottish Protestants who had arrived during the plantations of the 16th and early 17th century. Particularly violent events at Blackwater, Newry and Silvertown were presented in Britain as exemplars of the rebellion's nature. Estimations of the numbers of settler deaths began to escalate, creating a pervasive myth of extreme violence. When refugees began to arrive in the ports of Britain, this myth began to spread orally as well as through the press. But during 1642, as England and Wales became mired in their own war, interest in Ireland waned and money raised to support reconquest began to be used by both King Charles and parliament to raise forces.

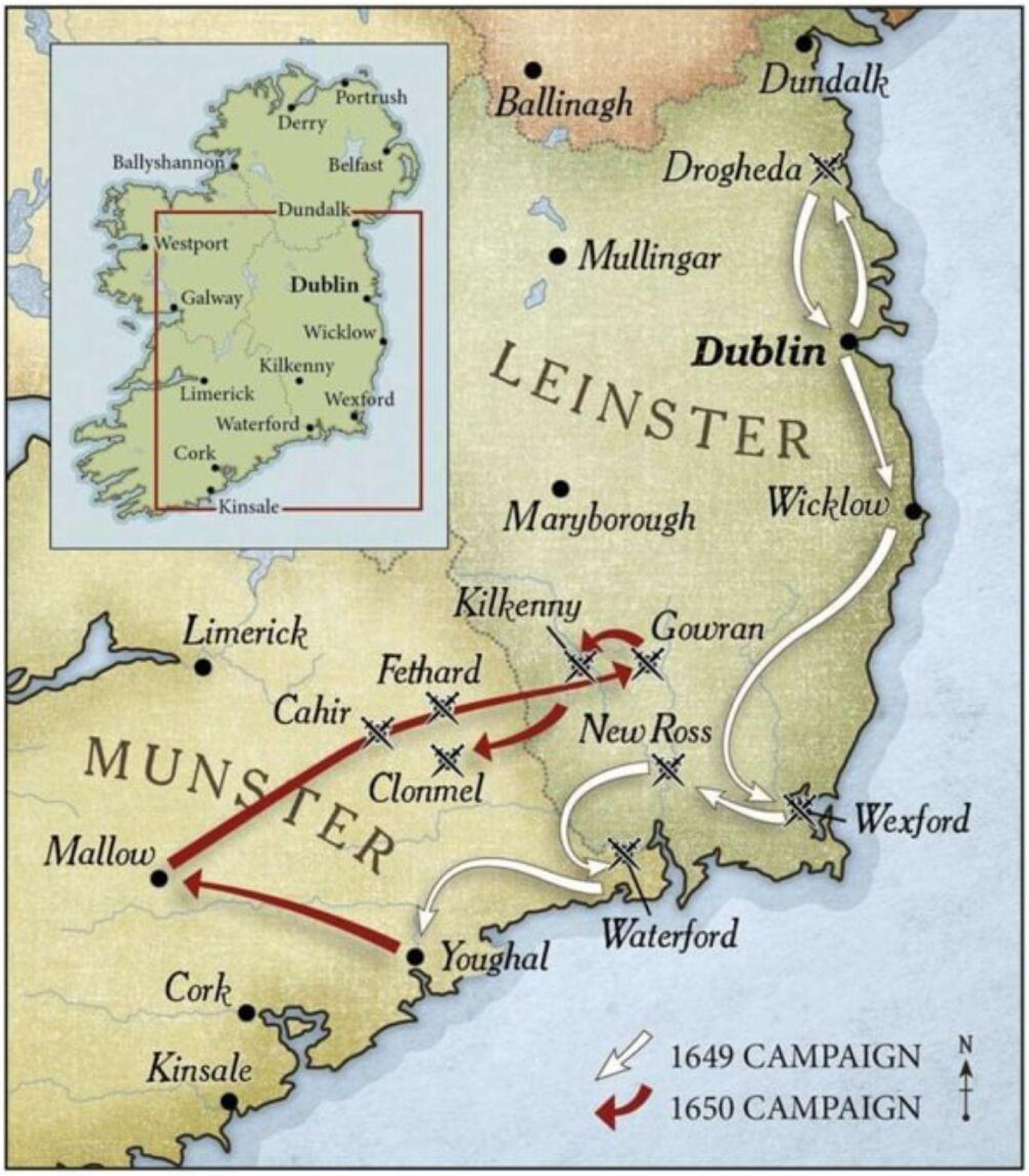
From April 1642, a series of meetings gave the rebellion a national purpose and organisation. An Oath of Association was in place before the end of October, and a provisional government consisting of an executive supreme council and a representative general assembly had been established. Regional councils were established in each of the four provinces (Connacht, Leinster, Munster and Ulster) and the counties within them. A general was appointed for each province to command the provincial force and a taxation system called the Grand Applotment.

By early 1644, the Confederation of Kilkenny – effectively an independent government – dominated much of southern and western Ireland, but found it hard to dislodge pockets of 'loyalist' forces, and made little headway into eastern Ulster, which was held by the Scottish forces sent there in 1641–2. Dublin, too, remained in the hands of the royalist lord lieutenant, the Marquis of Ormond.

In September 1643 the king, who was planning to repatriate the English and Welsh forces that had been sent to Ireland, hoping to use them at home to defeat parliament, agreed a ceasefire with the Confederation – which the Scots in Ulster did not sign. Instead, the Edinburgh government concluded a treaty with Westminster – the Solemn League and Covenant – and in January 1644 sent an army into northern England.

Fighting in Britain meant that in Ireland there was little effective coordination against the Confederation. Even when the first passage of the Civil War ended in 1646, attempts to take decisive action in Ireland were hampered by political divisions within the English parliament and a growing rift between Westminster and Edinburgh.

However, in Ireland the Confederation's fragile unity was crumbling. Mistrust between the more radical factions and the 'Old English' (descendants of Norman invaders) led to a series of lacklustre military campaigns. Wracked by its own wars, Ireland played little part in the second phase of Civil War in Britain during 1648. However, discussions between the Confederation and royalists bore fruit, and an alliance between the two sides was arranged in January 1649 – too late to intervene in the war across the Irish Sea, and less than a fortnight before the death of Charles I.



In campaigns of 1649 and 1650, Cromwell's troops swept along Ireland's east coast, then advanced into the Catholic Confederation's heartland of Munster

MAP ILLUSTRATION: PAUL HEWITT–BATTLEFIELD DESIGN

Cromwell's war

After the king's trial and execution, the newly established republic inherited Ireland from the abolished monarchy. As the definite power now established in England and Wales, parliament demonstrated a fresh determination to impose its authority in Ireland. The then Lieutenant General Oliver Cromwell voiced the concerns: "I had rather be over-run by a Cavalierish interest than a Scotch interest; I had rather be over-run with a Scotch interest than an Irish interest; and I think of all, this is the most dangerous, and if they shall be able to carry on with this work they will make this the most miserable people on earth."

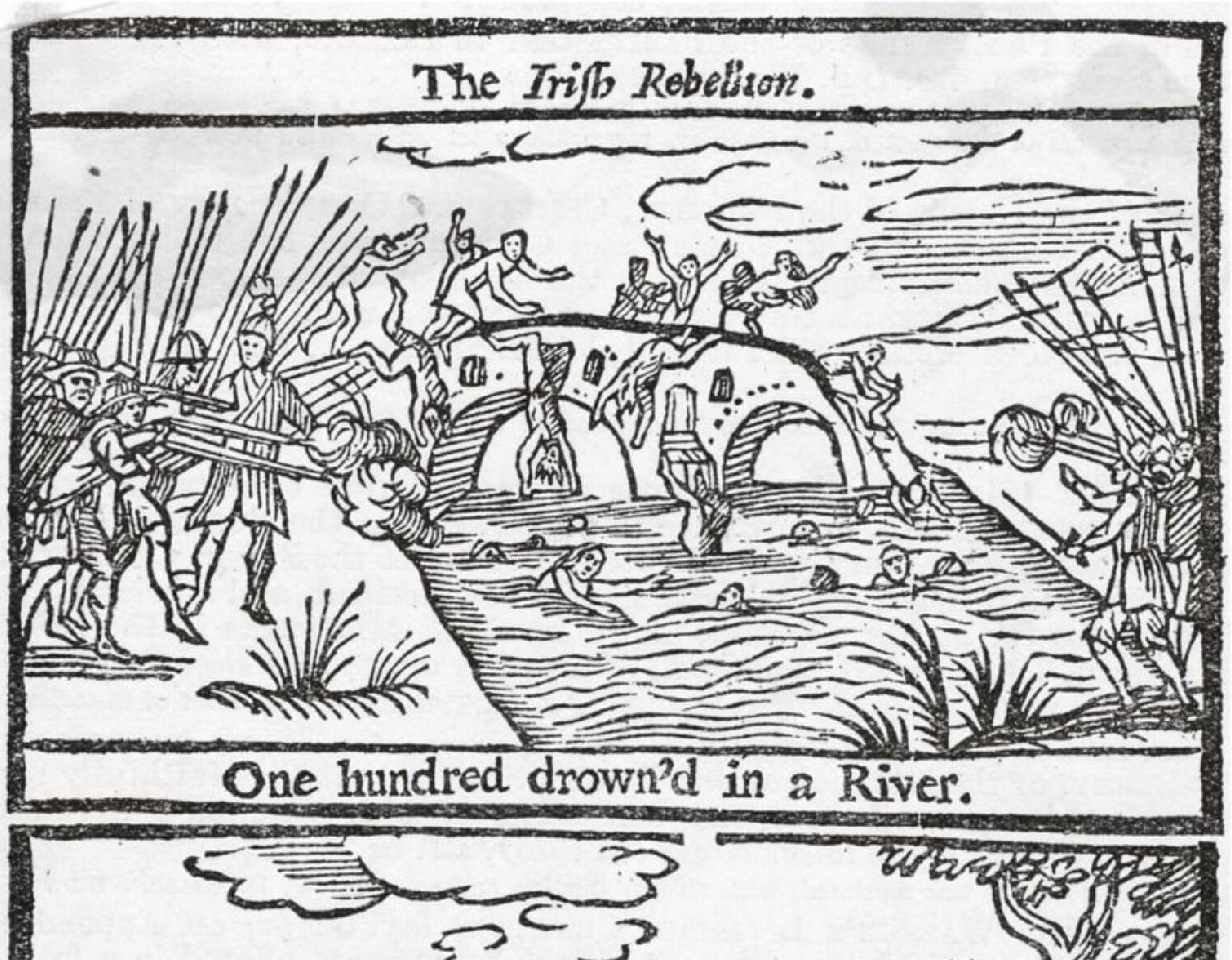
His reasoning accepted, Cromwell was given command of an army dispatched to subdue Ireland, landing at Ringsend in Dublin Bay on 15 August 1649. For the first time he was commanding a fully independent force and, though he remained second in command of the army under Lord Fairfax, in Ireland he enjoyed enhanced freedom of movement.

Like most Englishmen, Cromwell's attitude to Roman Catholicism – the religion of the vast majority of Irish men and women – was multi-layered. Before the war, he would have been aware of Roman Catholics in his home region of Huntingdonshire and the Isle of Ely; he may have traded and socialised with them to a certain degree, but he would not have approved of their religion. He would also have been gravely concerned about the threat that the Catholic Confederation presented to the Protestant republic. Nevertheless, Cromwell did not target Irish civilians; indeed, he issued instructions to his troops that all Irish non-combatants should be treated fairly, and that all requisitions should be paid for.

To protect the northern approaches to Dublin, Cromwell struck north into County Louth, on the border between Leinster and Ulster, where the port of Drogheda on the river Boyne had – after initially holding out against the rebels – been taken by royalist forces. Cromwell besieged the town from 3 September, expecting any initial breach in the walls to be followed by a tough fight and a step-by-step battle for territory. Instead, when Cromwell's New Model Army gained a foothold in the town there was a surprising collapse of resistance, and the defenders began to draw back.

Estimations of the numbers of settler deaths began to escalate, creating a pervasive myth of extreme violence

Parts of Cromwell's army seized the bridge across the Boyne and pursued the fleeing rebels. Their actions at this point have been much discussed; the attackers have been accused of behaving abominably, killing defeated soldiers and civilians indiscriminately. Though the numbers are hotly disputed, civilian casualties were certainly far lower than some of the wild estimates suggested – some claim that several thousand non-combatants were slaughtered, yet evidence of civilian deaths is sparse. Possibly worse was Cromwell's attitude to the defeated soldiers: he argued


The Iriſh Rebellion.
One hundred drown'd in a River.
Boys forced to kill the Proteſtants.

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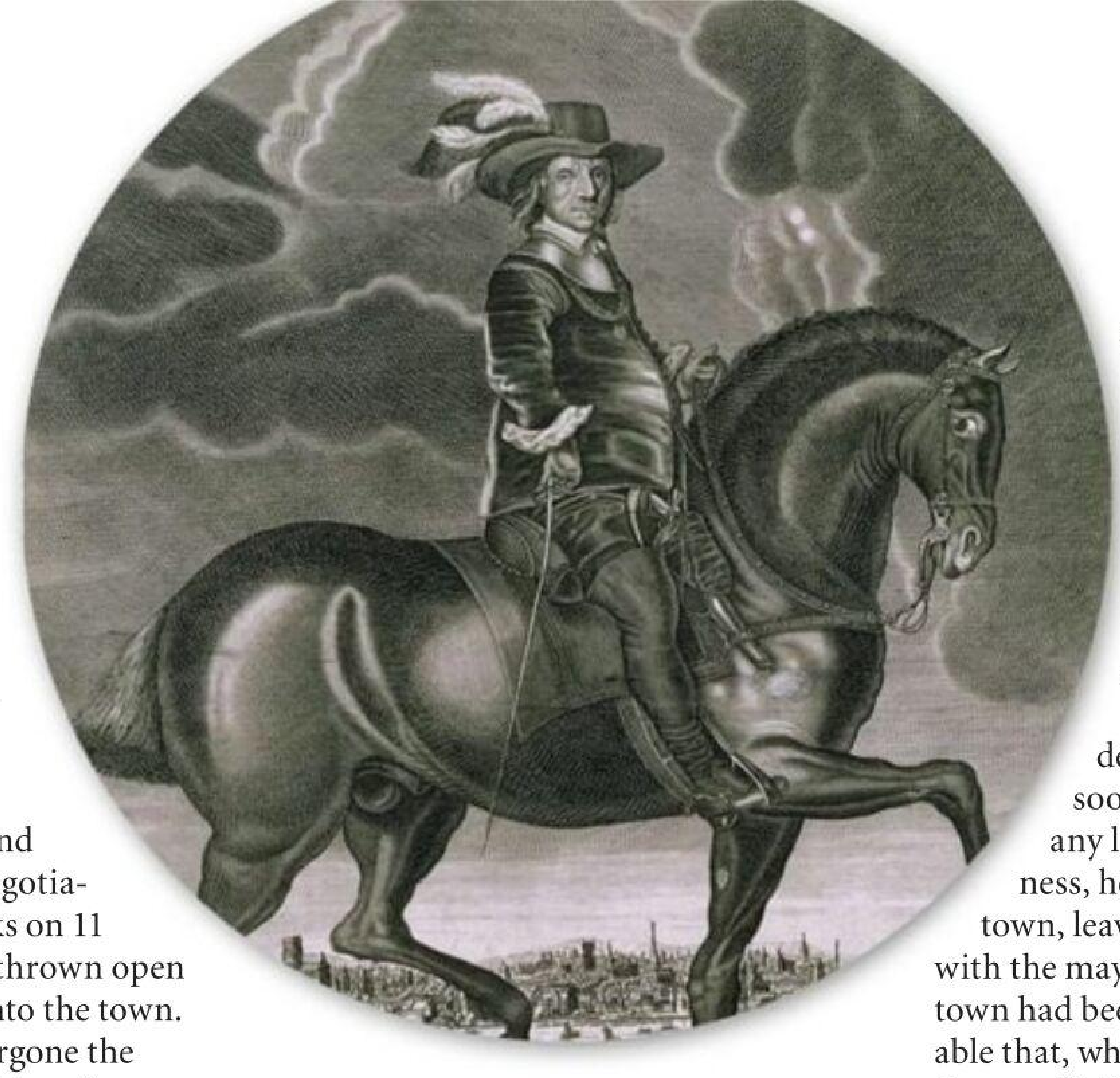
Protestant settlers are massacred by Irish Catholics during the 1641 rebellion, as shown in English woodcuts. The violent episodes were reported (and murders exaggerated) in England for anti-Irish propaganda purposes



An equestrian portrait of Oliver Cromwell c1655. His successes during the Irish campaigns earned him renown in England

that killing them was merely enacting God's will, justified by their rejection of surrender terms.

Leaving Drogheda, Cromwell detached forces to attack Ulster while he marched south to Wexford where, a month later, a similarly horrendous surge of violence occurred. When Cromwell brought his siege artillery to bear on the town and castle, the governor opened negotiations; however, during the talks on 11 October, the castle gates were thrown open and Cromwell's men rushed into the town. Here, despite not having undergone the stress and pressure of a brutalising siege, they reportedly acted as they had at Drogheda: Cromwell lost control of his men, and again some civilians lost their lives. In justifying his troops' appalling behaviour, he cited atrocities allegedly committed against the town's Protestants during the rebellion, claiming they were "mirrored" during his "siege" and suggesting that divine providence had led to the New Model Army's actions.

Cromwell argued that the brutality at Drogheda and Wexford served a strategic purpose – that the fear engendered by such vicious actions would encourage other garrisons to surrender more quickly, and would thus ultimately save lives. Even if this was indeed his intention, the strategy was at best only marginally successful. Except at a few small and difficult-to-defend outposts, Cromwell faced resolute resistance. At New Ross, 20 miles west of Wexford, Lord Taaffe hung on for as long as he could, and before succumbing attempted to both win freedom of worship for Catholics and the right to retain his cannons. Waterford also resisted Cromwell successfully over the winter.

Confronting the Confederation

In 1650, Cromwell decided upon the bold strategy of taking war to the Confederation's heartland by advancing into Munster. The campaign was successful, and a string of garrisons fell: Fethard, Cashel, Cahir. On 22 March, Cromwell arrived at Kilkenny, the Confederation's capital, where the undersized garrison made the most of its limited resources before surrendering the town. As Cromwell's gains accumulated, the alliance confronting him began to fragment – but there was one last shock in store.

After the capture of Kilkenny, Cromwell marched south-west to Clonmel, where he began to prepare gun batteries around the town. He planned to blow a hole in the walls on the east side of the town, then have foot regiments force their way in and open the adjacent gate to allow the horse to drive into the town centre. However, the experienced garrison commander, Major-General Hugh Dubh O'Neill, built a set of supplementary defences inside the walls where he expected Cromwell to breach them. On 16 May, Cromwell attacked: as planned, his heavy artillery broke down the town walls and his foot soldiers pushed through the destroyed walls – only to find themselves in a trap.

Cromwell argued that the fear engendered by his vicious actions would encourage surrender and thus save lives

O'Neill had constructed a funnel-shaped earthwork with artillery at the end, on each side of which he set up improvised weapons that swung huge logs at the attackers. This bludgeoning, coupled with artillery and musket fire, devastated Cromwell's men; they were driven back, having sustained heavy losses. They had been unable to reach the gates, let alone open them, so the horse regiments remained outside, powerless to support the foot soldiers. After a pause, Cromwell simply tried the same tactic again, resulting in massive numbers of casualties – the largest loss experienced by the New Model Army, and one of the worst ever suffered by a British army.

Despite his successful defence of Clonmel, O'Neill soon found he could not hold out any longer. Under cover of darkness, he sneaked his forces out of the town, leaving Cromwell to negotiate with the mayor – never suspecting that the town had been de-militarised. It is remarkable that, when he did find out the truth, Cromwell did not take vengeance on the town or the mayor, but simply set out to pursue O'Neill's forces.

If Clonmel was a test of Cromwell's generalship, he had failed. If the surrender was a test of his integrity, though, he passed – and that perception of success in Ireland soon bore fruit. Cromwell left Ireland immediately after taking the town, returning England to protect his country from being "over-run by a Scotch interest", as he saw it. Within weeks of his return, he was promoted to Lord General.

In Cromwell's wake, war in Ireland lasted for almost three more years until Limerick was captured by his son-in-law, Henry Ireton, and the province of Connacht (Connaught) was conquered. The Commonwealth government renewed the long-standing plantation policy by giving land to ex-soldiers and displacing Irish Catholic families who had supported the Confederation – something erroneously labelled the Cromwellian Settlement. Combined with pre-war colonisation and the defeat of the Confederation, the subsequent 'resettlement' severely reduced the amount of property held by Roman Catholic families in Ireland. Despite some readjustments after 1660, defeat in the civil war was to underline Ireland's social and political subordination to Westminster for almost two hundred years.

Martyn Bennett is professor of early modern history at Nottingham Trent University, and author of *Cromwell at War: The Lord General and His Military Revolution* (IB Tauris, 2017)

DISCOVER MORE

BOOK

▶ **God's Executioner: Oliver Cromwell and the Conquest of Ireland** by Micheál Ó Siochrú (Faber & Faber, 2008)

GETTY

THE PRINCE AND THE DEVIL DOG

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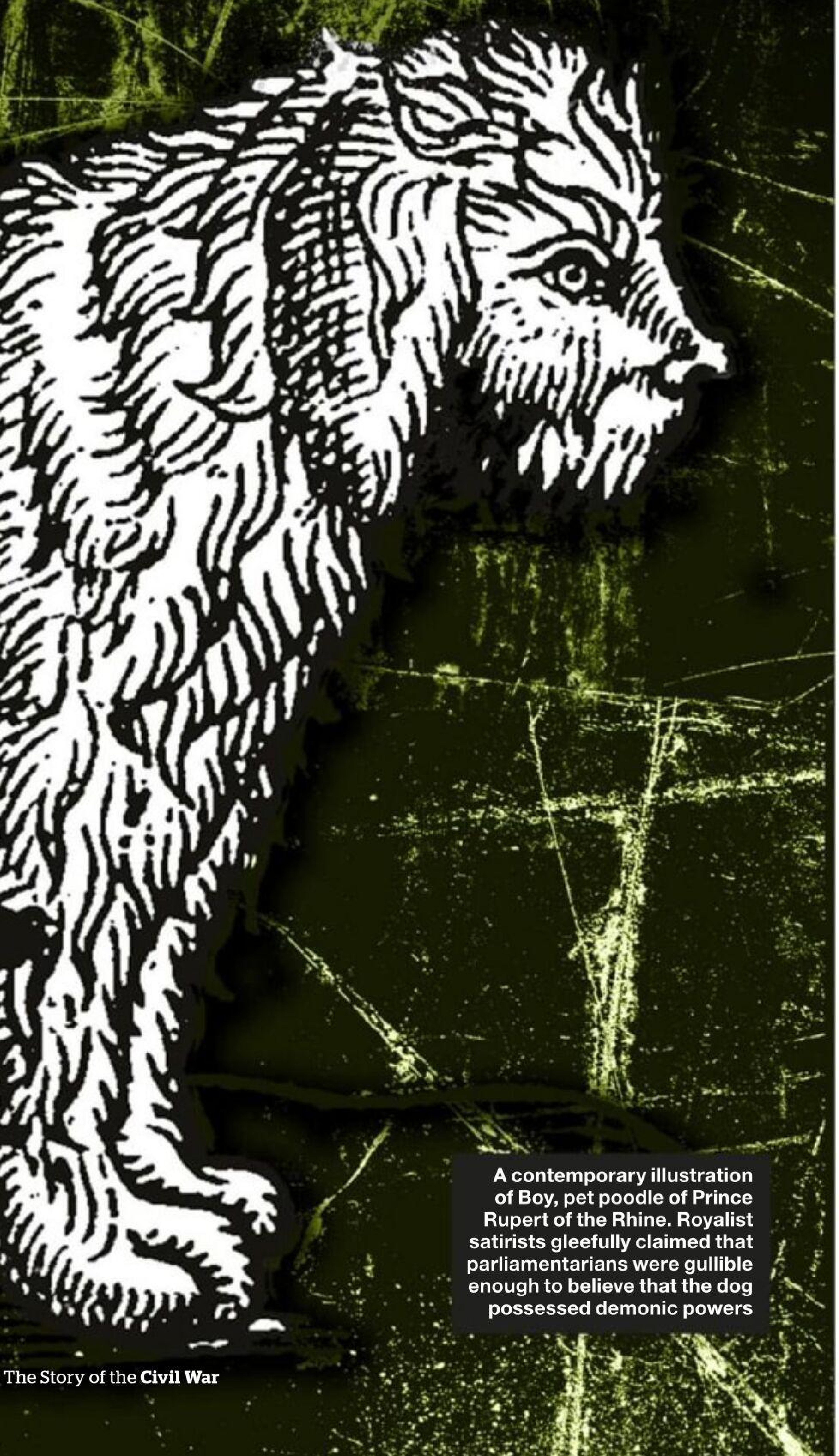
Mark Stoyle investigates claims that Charles I's chief cavalry commander in the Civil War was protected by a demon in the guise of a poodle



A contemporary illustration of Boy, pet poodle of Prince Rupert of the Rhine. Royalist satirists gleefully claimed that parliamentarians were gullible enough to believe that the dog possessed demonic powers

Among the minor celebrities of the Civil War, few retain the contemporary cachet of Prince Rupert's dog, Boy. Characterised by the polemicists of the 1640s as a 'dog-witch' who was in league with the devil, Boy was reintroduced to the world by the Victorian journalist Eliot Warburton in his book *Memoirs of Prince Rupert and the Cavaliers* in 1849. And from that day to this, the beast's reputation has steadily continued to grow.

Having been namechecked in dozens of scholarly books and articles, and featured as a supporting character in at least three historical novels and a brace of films, Boy has also enjoyed the ultimate accolade of being unleashed upon the nation's classrooms.

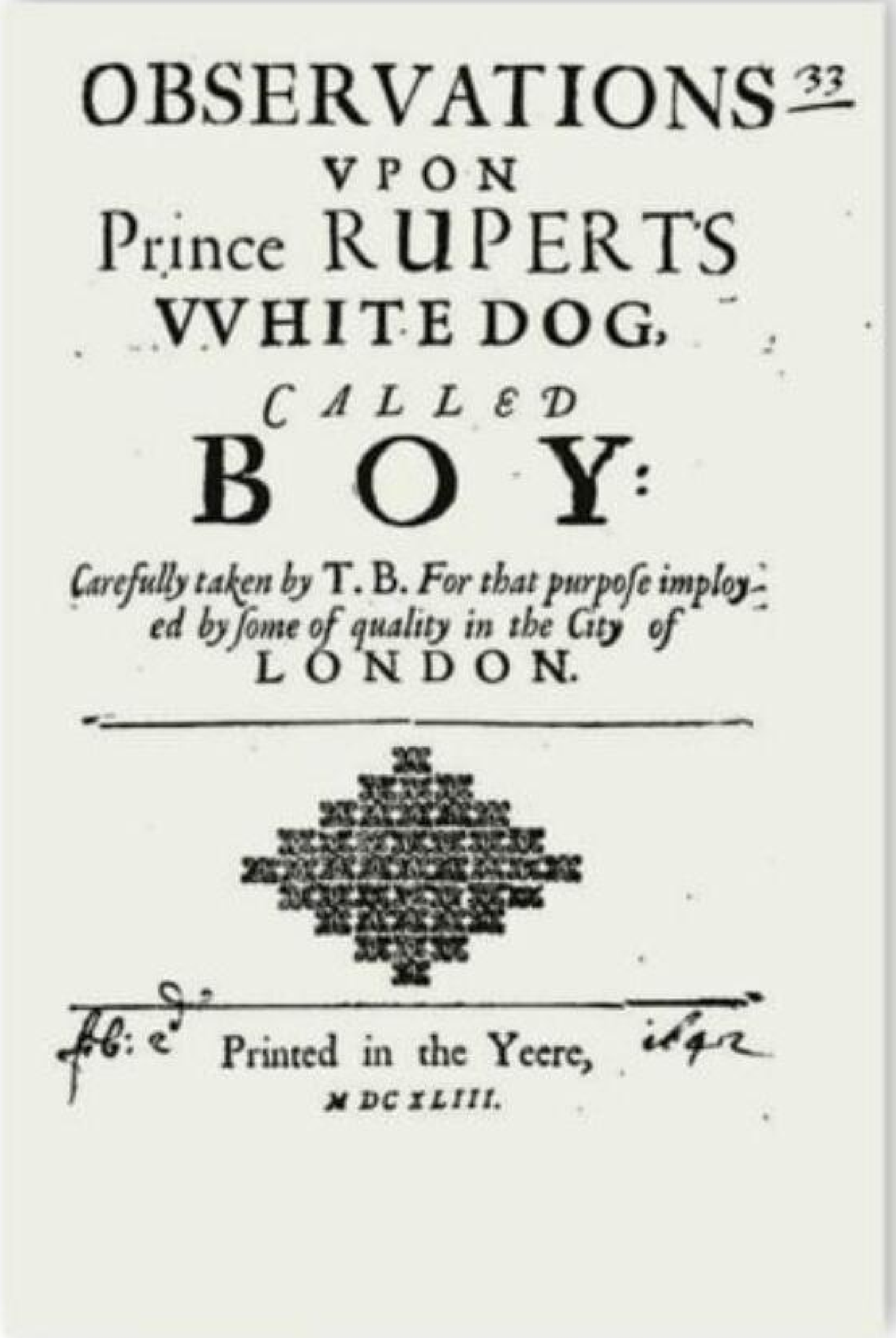
In *The Slimy Stuarts* – one of Terry Deary's bestselling 'Horrible Histories' series – readers are provided with a bite-sized account of Boy's life, which informs them that "the Roundheads were afraid of the dog's devilish powers". Next, they are encouraged to ascertain whether their teacher is "a historical brain-box or a hysterical bonehead" by asking him or her whether or not it is true that the "cavalier general, Prince Rupert, taught his dog to cock its leg every time someone said the name of the Roundhead leader [John] Pym". The youthful inquisitors are subsequently assured that this statement is, indeed, correct and that Boy "also jumped happily in the air" when Rupert said the words "King Charles".

Deary's words, though clearly intended to amuse and entertain, faithfully reflect the way in which Boy has been represented in many popular histories of the English Civil War. Yet the authors of those histories have been misled, because the view of Boy epitomised by Deary's words is simply the

It's claimed that Rupert taught his dog to cock its leg every time it heard the name of Roundhead leader John Pym

20th- and 21st-century perpetuation of a 17th-century hoax.

The strange story of Prince Rupert's dog began in 1638, when Rupert of the Rhine – the youthful nephew of Charles I of England – was captured at the battle of Vlotho in Germany by Austrian Catholic forces. Some of the Austrian soldiers claimed that they had been unable to kill or wound the prince, despite having fired at him twice at point-blank range; as a result, the rumour began to spread that Rupert was invulnerable to bullets, or 'shot-free'. The belief that it was possible to render oneself bulletproof through occult means was widespread in the German lands at this time, and Rupert was by no means the only contemporary to whom such powers were attributed.



OBSERVATIONS 33
VPON
Prince RUPERTS
VVHITE DOG,
CALLED
BOY:
Carefully taken by T. B. *For that purpoſe imployed by ſome of quality in the City of*
LONDON.

Feb: 2d Printed in the Yeere, 1642
MDCXLIII.

The frontispiece of an anonymous pamphlet mocking those who allegedly feared Boy's magical powers

A rare breed

Having been carried into Austria by his captors, Rupert was imprisoned at Linz Castle, where he languished for some time. Hoping to lift the prince's spirits, the Earl of Arundel – an old family friend – sent Rupert a dog to keep him company.

Virtually nothing is known for certain about this animal, but it appears to have been a hunting poodle of a 'rare' breed. When Rupert was finally released from Linz Castle in 1641 he presumably took his new companion with him, but the dog does not resurface in the historical record until more than a year later, by which time the prince himself was embroiled in the Civil War.

During the early 1640s, Charles I and his opponents in parliament had become locked in an increasingly bitter political struggle. Having tried and failed to arrest his chief critics, Charles eventually abandoned his capital in January 1642 and summoned his loyal subjects to assist him against the 'rebels' at Westminster. Rupert was swift to answer his uncle's call, and in August he was appointed as general of the royalist horse.

Two months later Rupert and his troopers smashed the parliamentarian cavalry regiments that were ranged against them at the battle of Edgehill. A complete parliamentarian defeat was narrowly averted but, as the royalist army advanced upon London, so Roundhead polemicists grew ever more shrill in their denunciations of the 'outlandish' prince who marched at the head of the Cavalier forces. During the early months of 1642, hundreds of printed pamphlets had been pouring off the capital's presses every month, many of them intended to denigrate the king's friends and exalt his foes. Now, several pamphlets appeared that sought to exploit the occult rumours that had previously circulated around Rupert by suggesting that the king's nephew was a shot-proof 'shape-shifter' armed with devilish powers.

These claims – made in an age, it should be remembered, when most people still believed implicitly in the reality of witchcraft – were clearly intended to convince the pamphlets' more impressionable readers that the royalist cause was satanic.

It's impossible to say just how far such allegations were credited among the ordinary people of England. However, following the king's failure to take London, and his retreat to Oxford in November, the royalist polemicist John Cleveland hit back with a satirical poem that mocked the Roundheads for their supposed credulousness. Cleveland claimed that the belief that Rupert possessed magical powers was universal among the Roundheads, and also declared that they were convinced that the prince's dog was his 'devil', or familiar spirit – that is to say, a demon in the shape of an animal that provided him with occult assistance.

He claimed that the prince's companion was not a dog but was rather a 'handsome white woman"

It was during the course of this poem that Cleveland suggested – with his tongue firmly in his cheek – that if anyone spoke the name of Charles, the dog at once "comes aloft for him," but "holds up his Malignant leg at Pym". It was an off-the-cuff jest that would later come to be regarded by many historians as representative of what the parliamentarians had truly believed.

Cleveland's satire clearly delighted his fellow royalists – suggesting, as it did, that the Roundheads were gullible fools – and by January 1643 the king's supporters were reported to be drinking healths to Prince Rupert's dog. So much mirth did the poem provoke that, soon afterwards, an anonymous royalist writer sought to capitalise on it by composing an entire pamphlet about the animal.

Artful tract

Entitled *Observations upon Prince Rupert's White Dog Called Boy* (see image, above left) this artful tract took the form of a letter – a reproduction, it was clearly implied, of an original missive that had supposedly been sent from Oxford to London by a parliamentarian spy named 'TB'. Written in a parody of the Puritans' canting style, the letter solemnly listed the magical powers that Boy was held to possess, and claimed that the prince's companion was not, in fact, a real dog, but was rather a "handsome white woman" in the shape of a dog, with whom Rupert enjoyed frequent sexual encounters.

Here, TB's ventriloquist was tipping his hat to the contemporary conviction that witches had sex with their familiars – and, in the process, hinting very strongly that Rupert was himself a witch. Not surprisingly, the publication of the *Observations* caused a considerable stir, and three separate editions of the pamphlet are known to have been printed – one of them featuring a woodcut engraving of Boy. By now, Rupert's dog had become front-page news, and the animal went on to feature in a whole series of pamphlets, some of them even more scurrilous than the *Observations*. There can be little doubt that, by mid-1643, Boy was the most celebrated 'familiar' that England had ever seen.

Throughout late 1643 and early 1644 royalist writers continued to derive great amusement from the mock-serious claim – first promulgated by Cleveland in his poem and then elaborated by 'TB' in his faux-parliamentarian pamphlet – that the Roundheads regarded Boy with superstitious fear. But Cavalier laughter soon turned to tears. In July 1644, Rupert and the king's northern army were decisively defeated at the battle of Marston Moor. Thousands of royalists were killed – and among the casualties was the prince's famous dog.

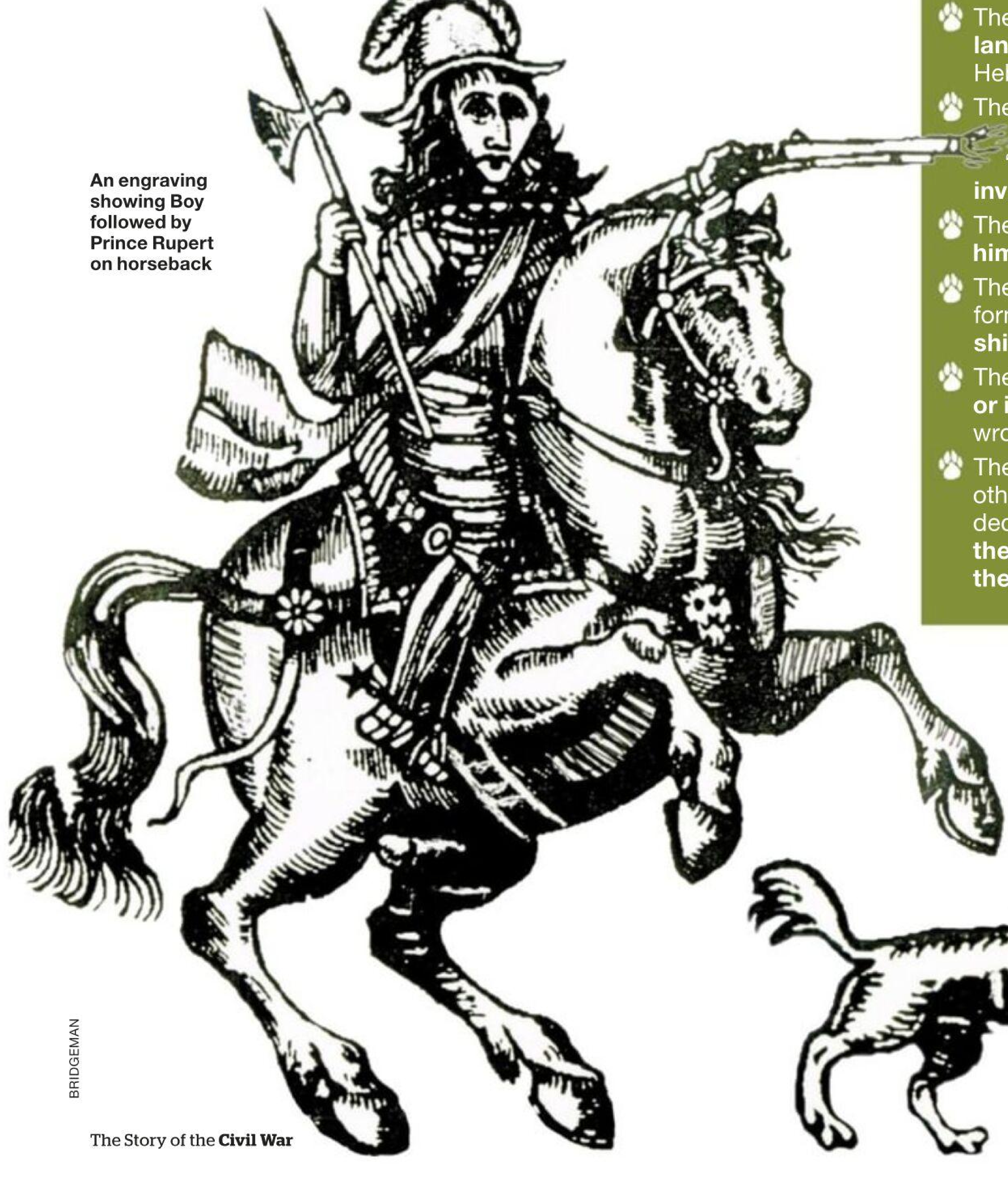
Parliamentarian polemicists seized on Boy's death with predictable glee. Royalist writers, for their part, never seem to have mentioned Boy again; for them, the joke that the dog could assist his master in battle had turned distinctly sour.

Despite the assertions of the royalist propagandists, and of the many later scholars who have been deceived by their effusions, there is little evidence to suggest

POODLE POWER

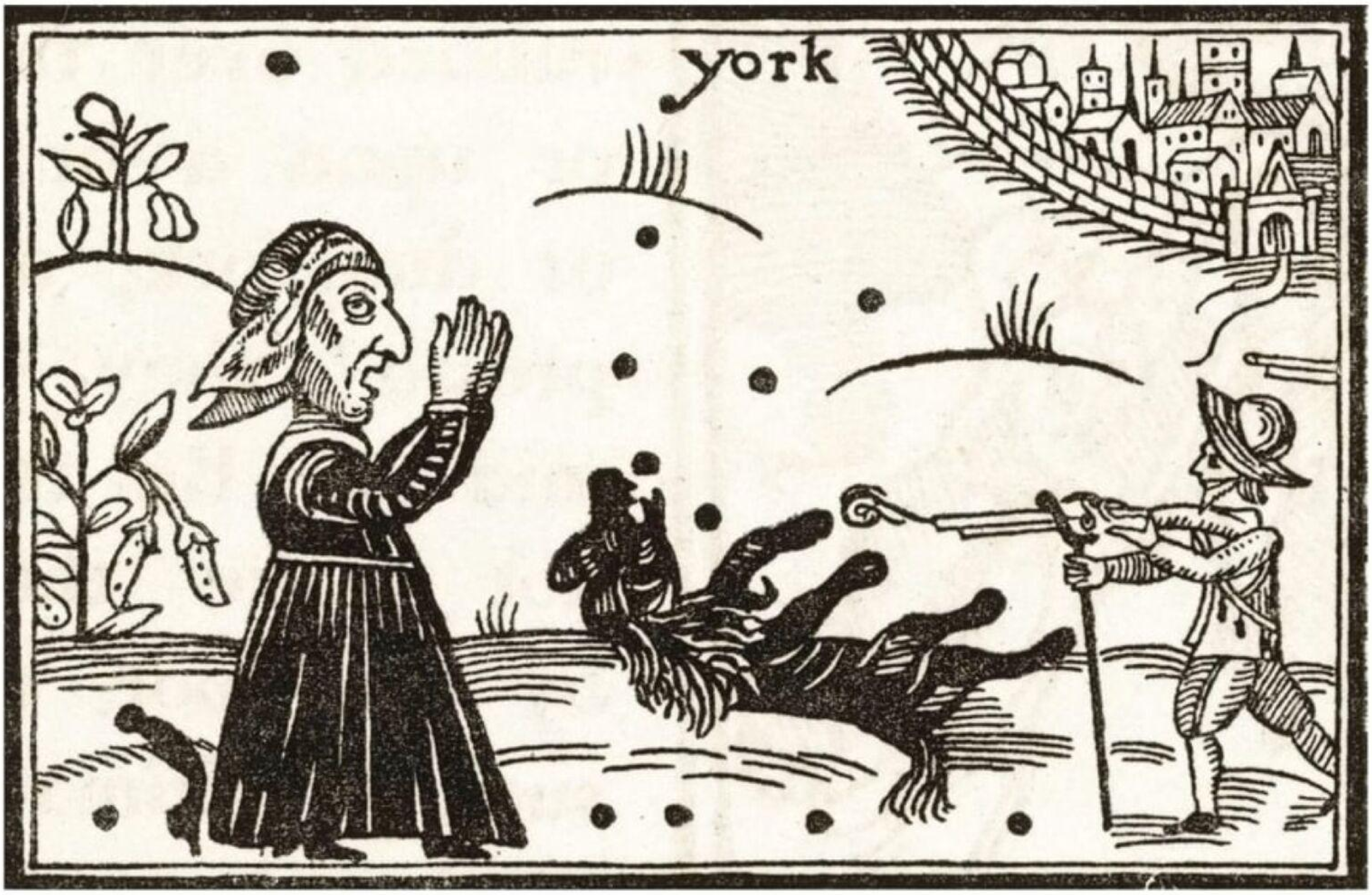
According to a contemporary pamphlet, Boy possessed a wide and diverse range of extraordinary occult powers:

- The power to "prophecie", or **predict the future**
- The power to **find hidden treasure** and all sorts of other concealed goods
- The power to **speak many languages** (including Hebrew and 'High Dutch')
- The power to render both himself and his master 'weapon-proof' or **invulnerable to bullets**
- The power to make **himself invisible**
- The power to assume the form of other people by **shifting his shape**
- The power to **inflict death or injury** on those who had wronged him
- The power to prevent others from taking rational decisions, by **rendering them "impotent… [in] their minds"**



An engraving showing Boy followed by Prince Rupert on horseback

BRIDGEMAN



Boy is killed at the battle of Marston Moor, while a witch looks on in a woodcut illustration

that the belief that Boy was a familiar spirit was genuinely widespread in the parliamentarian camp. Nevertheless, the repeated references to Boy in the ephemeral literature of the day clearly had the effect of raising the profile of familiars in general, while the persistent claims that Rupert possessed supernatural powers were undoubtedly believed by at least some of the ordinary people who encountered them.

Popular anxiety

The bizarre reports that were circulated about Rupert and his dog almost certainly helped to fuel the growing popular anxiety about witchcraft that became evident during the 1640s. They may even have contributed to the great English witch hunt of 1644–47, when Matthew Hopkins, the so-called 'Witch-finder General', hunted down scores of alleged witches in parliamentarian East Anglia. It is intriguing to note that at the height of this panic, James More, a Suffolk man suspected of witchcraft, testified to the fact that, several years earlier, he and a relative had sent three 'imps', or familiars, to assist Prince Rupert.

More's testimony shows how the stories about Rupert and Boy – originally invented for polemical purposes in Oxford and London – had filtered down to the villages of provincial England, where they had been incorporated, by some at least, into their occult world view. In this way, partisan political propaganda had collided with popular witch-belief to produce strange new fusions.

In 1646, the royalist cause collapsed and Rupert departed for the continent. After suffering many vicissitudes during the Interregnum, he returned to England after the Restoration of the monarchy, and was eventually buried at Westminster Abbey in 1682. By that time Boy had been all but forgotten, and it was only with the 19th- and 20th-century rediscovery of the satirical texts written about him by the royalist polemicists that the conviction that the Roundheads had been terrified of Prince Rupert's dog again took root.

How delighted John Cleveland would have been to know that the hare – or perhaps one should say the devil-dog – that he had first set running in 1642–43 would still be subverting Roundhead reputations more than 350 years later. H

The bizarre reports about Rupert and his dog may have contributed to the great witch hunt by Matthew Hopkins

Mark Stoyle is professor of early modern history at the University of Southampton, and author of *The Black Legend of Prince Rupert's Dog: Witchcraft and Propaganda during the English Civil War* (Liverpool University Press, 2011)

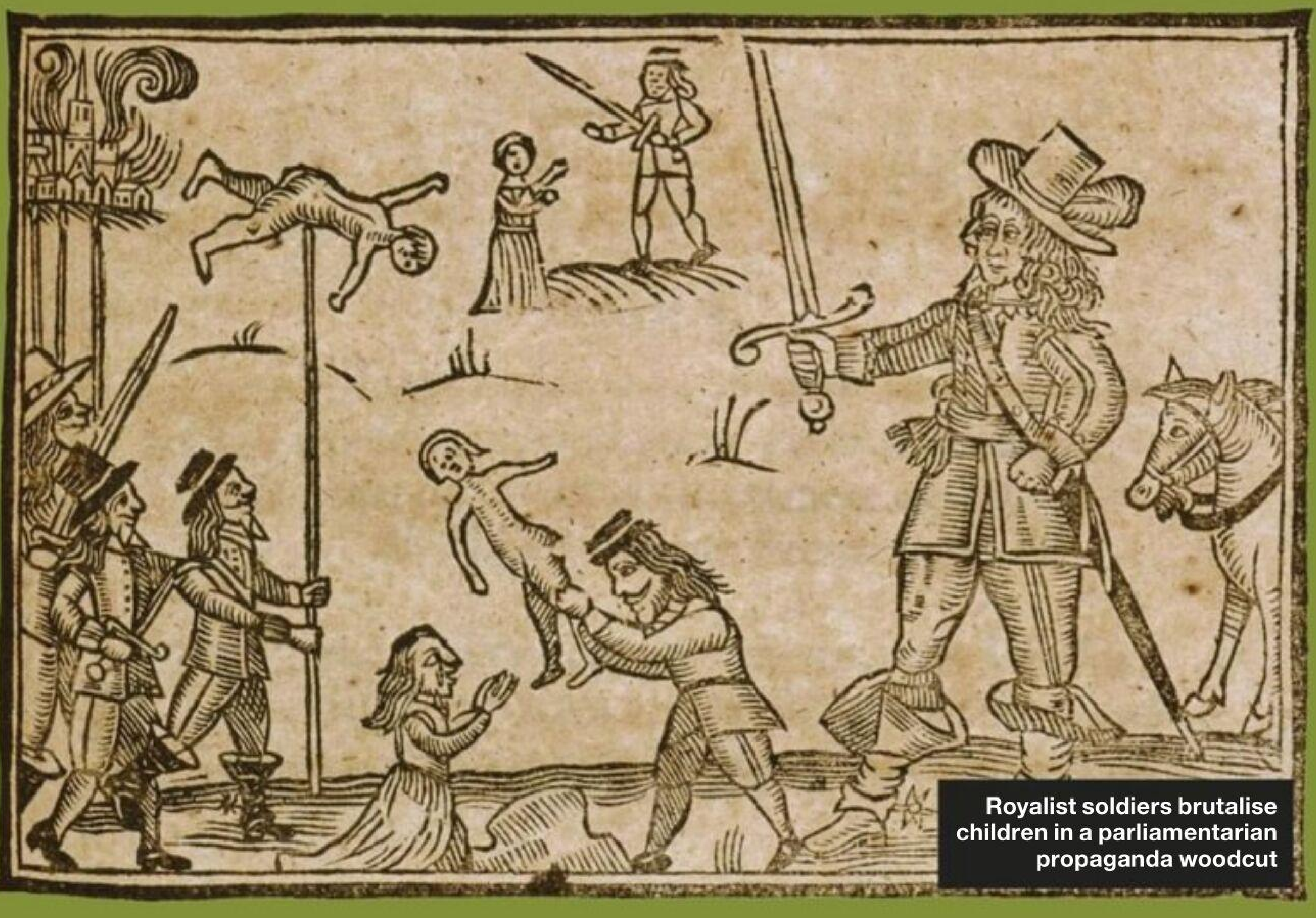
DISCOVER MORE

BOOKS

- **Witchfinders: A Seventeenth-Century English Tragedy** by Malcolm Gaskill (John Murray, 2005)
- **Instruments of Darkness: Witchcraft in England, 1550–1750** by James Sharpe (Penguin, 1997)
- **Witchcraft, Magic and Superstition in England, 1640–70** by Frederick Valletta (Routledge, 2000)

ALAMY

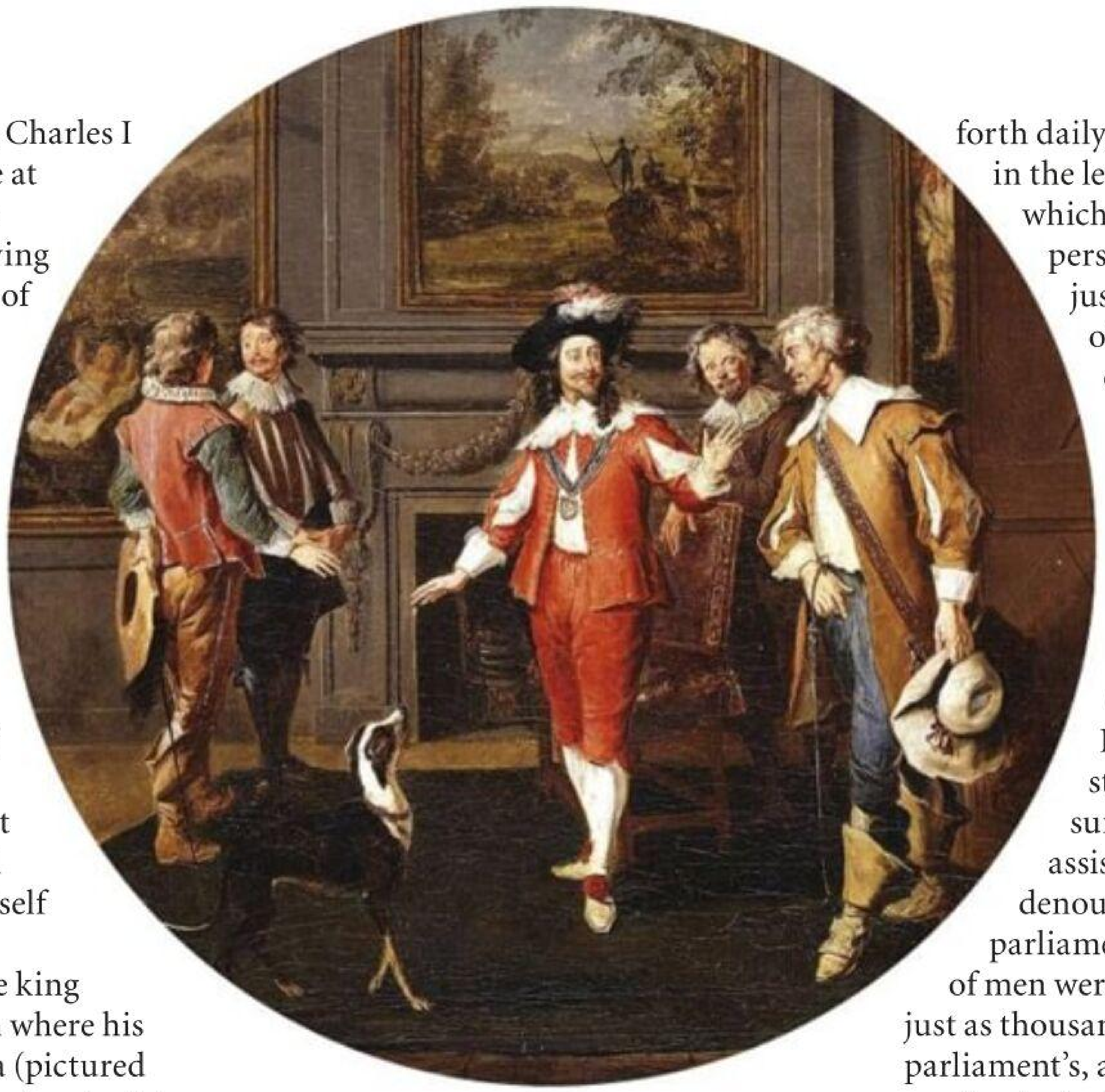
"SUCH TIMES WERE NEVER BEFORE SEEN IN ENGLAND..."



Royalist soldiers brutalise children in a parliamentarian propaganda woodcut

Tens of thousands were killed in battle during the Civil War – but still more died from related diseases and deprivation, many of them civilians. **Mark Stoyle** explores the lives of ordinary people during the years of strife

BRIDGEMAN



Charles I at Hampton Court, to where he briefly fled from London in 1642 at the start of the unrest that evolved into the Civil War. During the nine years of intermittent conflict that followed, the lives of ordinary people across Britain and Ireland were devastated by the war

BRIDGEMAN

In January 1642, King Charles I abandoned his palace at Whitehall and fled to Hampton Court, leaving London in the hands of his political opponents in parliament. The king's decision to relinquish his capital was a momentous one. By dividing himself physically from the men who sat in parliament, Charles forced English men and women to confront the fact that there were now two rival sources of authority in the kingdom, rather than just one – and that what had long been a political crisis was fast transforming itself into an incipient civil war.

Over the ensuing weeks, the king travelled first to Dover – from where his beloved wife, Henrietta Maria (pictured below), set sail for the continent and safety – and then to York, where he set about rallying support for his cause. Charles's sorrowful parting from Henrietta Maria may be said to have foreshadowed the hundreds of thousands of similarly sorrowful partings – of husbands from wives, of sons from parents, of brothers from sisters – that would shortly take place across the entire country, as men of every age, rank and calling left behind their homes and families to serve in the rival armies of king and parliament.

During the spring and early summer of 1642, angry confrontations broke out in communities up and down the land as the king's partisans, many of them religious conservatives, clashed with the parliament's partisans, many of whom were zealous Protestants (or, as their enemies termed them, 'puritans').

One of the clearest signs of this hardening ideological divide was the way in which the hostile nicknames recently coined in London to describe the supporters of king and parliament – 'Cavaliers' and 'Roundhead s' – spread rapidly into the provinces.

In July 1642, for example, two Norwich men went to see an acquaintance, a certain Robert Riches, and were told that he was in the Angel Inn. Stepping inside, they met Riches and sat down together to drink "a jug of beer". Their conversation soon took an alarming turn when – as one of the men later testified to the local magistrates – "the said Riches pulled out a knife… which he said he had bought to defend himself and, if occasion did serve, to cut the Puritans and the Roundheads' bollocks off". Not content with this, Riches then went on to speak "ill terms" of the king's opponents and to declare that "he did hope to see them hanged". Having assured his listeners that two prominent parliamentarian noblemen "were both bastards, and their mother was a whore", Riches finally concluded his verbal assault on the parliament and all its works by "pull[ing] out and read[ing] diverse scandalous verses" against a number of MPs.

This anecdote nicely illustrates the way in which the supporters of both sides drew on "the infinite [number of] base, abusive ballads and trifling pamphlets" that, in the words of one indignant clergyman, "came forth daily, very rude [and] uncivil" in the lead-up to the Civil War, and which undoubtedly did much to persuade many individuals of the justice of their own cause and of the iniquity of their opponents. Indeed, some contemporaries lamented that it was the outbreak of these "paper wars" that had paved the way for the physical conflict that so rapidly succeeded them.

> **Two nicknames recently coined in London – 'Cavaliers' and 'Roundheads' – rapidly spread into the provinces**

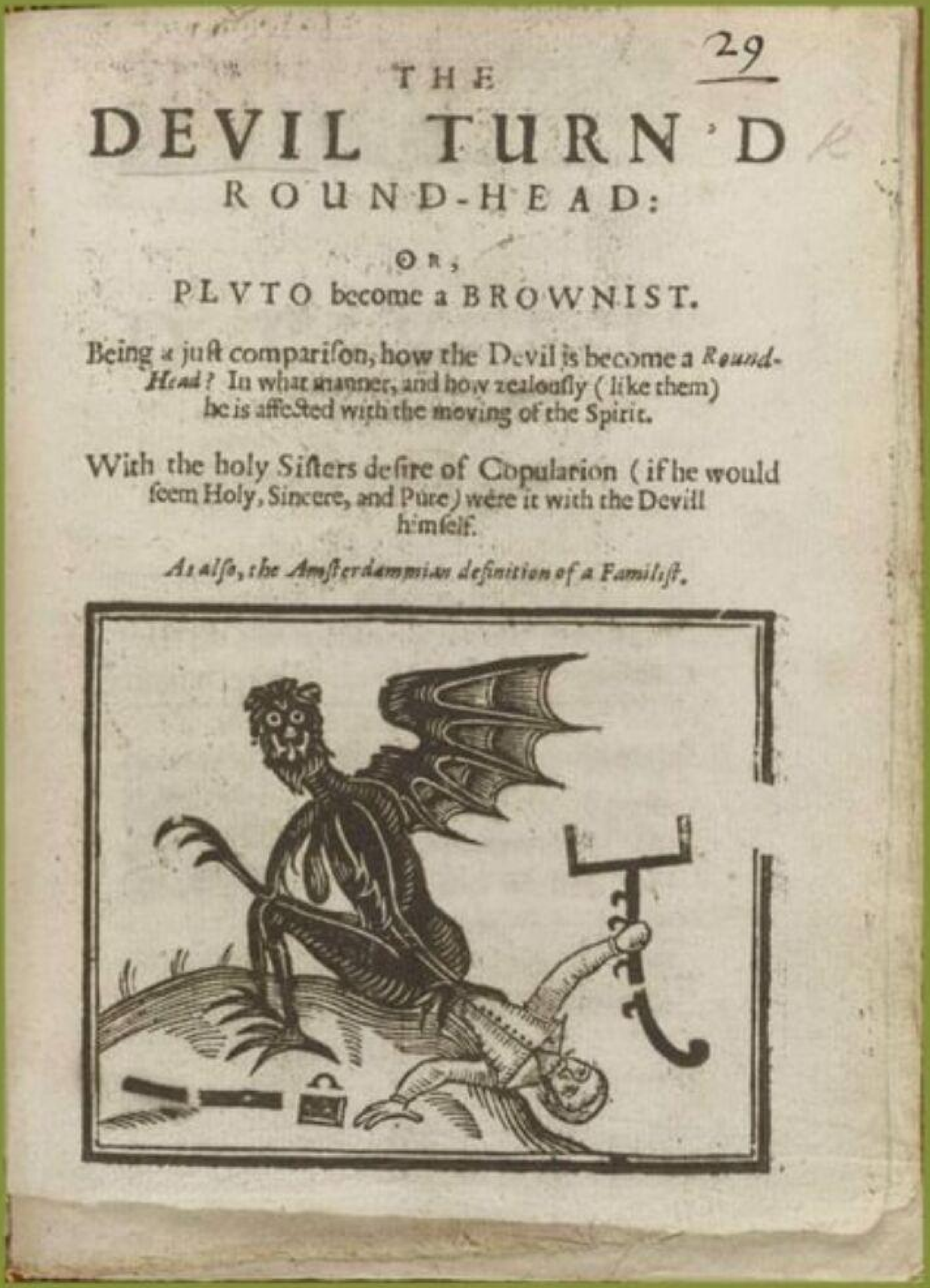
Outbreak of war

In August, Charles raised his standard at Nottingham and summoned his loyal subjects to assist him against those whom he denounced as the "rebels" in parliament. Within weeks, thousands of men were flocking to the king's camp, just as thousands had already flocked to parliament's, and in October the two rival armies clashed in the first great battle of the war at Edgehill in Warwickshire.

In a letter he wrote to his mother in the wake of that engagement, one northern royalist revealed the depth of the religious motivation that had prompted him, like so many of the most committed combatants on either side, to embrace his chosen cause. "Dear Mother," he began, "I am very thankful to God to receive the glad news of your health. It did much trouble me to depart from you," the young man went on, "but I thought it better to do so… [than] to alter my resolution [to join the king's army]… which my conscience wonderfully tells me, is the most noble, just and Christian cause that can be defended, and such as I hope God will bless with an happy success: being for the defence of his own truth and [of] his own anointed [ie, Charles I himself]."

Many on the parliamentary side were equally convinced that they were fighting a holy war. Needless to say, though, both armies also contained plenty of less-principled individuals, including European mercenaries such as Croatian captain Carlo Fantom (for more on whom see page 43).

Almost everyone had expected that the quarrel would be decided in one decisive battle – that the war would be over by Christmas – but Edgehill proved a draw. As a result, during late 1642 the conflict spread to every corner of the kingdom: as Charles established his headquarters in Oxford, his opponents tightened their grip on London, and royalists and parliamentarians everywhere else battled it out for control. This was a catastrophe for the ordinary



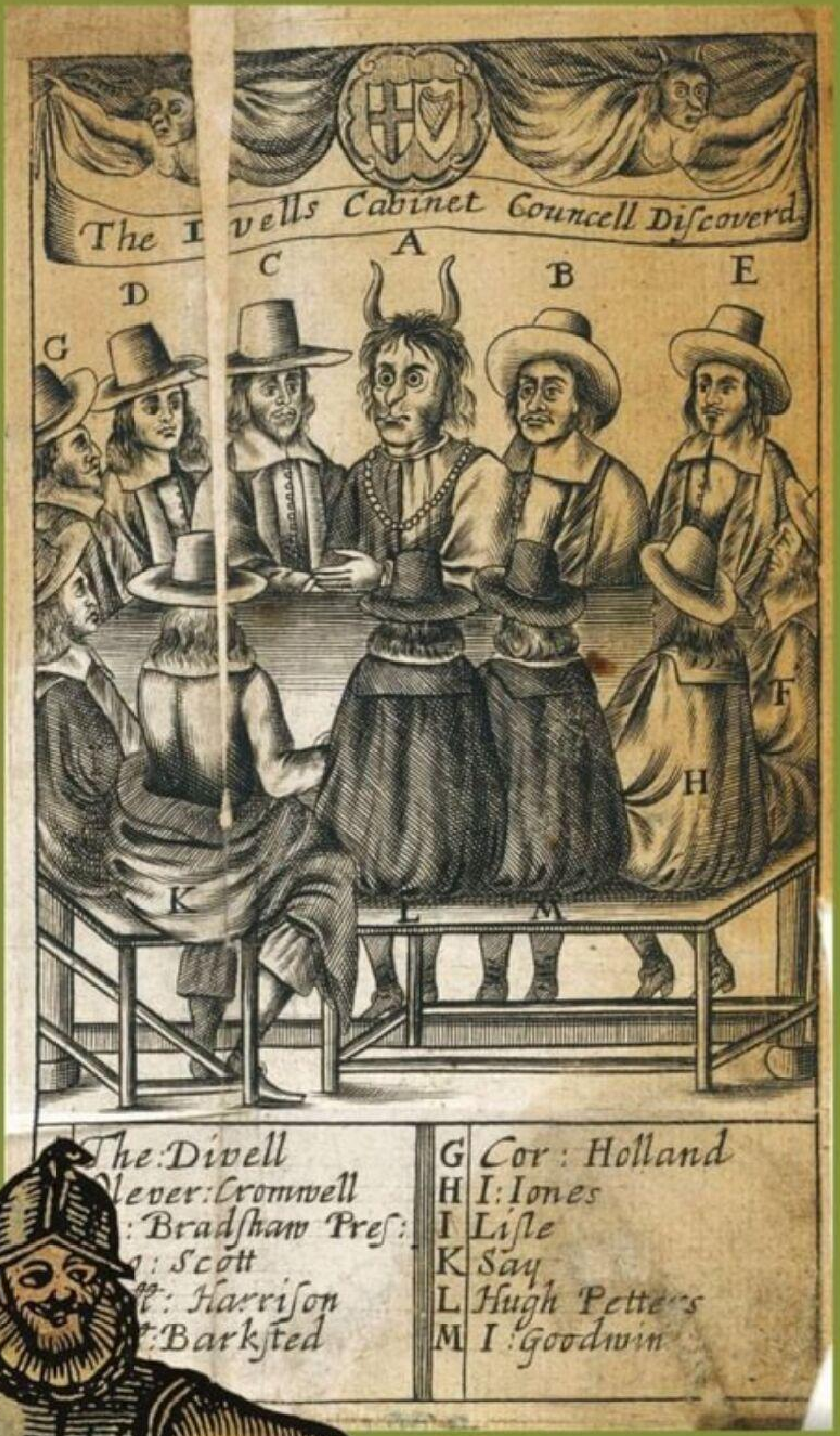
29

THE
DEVIL TURN'D
ROUND-HEAD:
OR,
PLVTO become a BROWNIST.

Being a juſt compariſon, how the Devil is become a *Round-Head*? In what manner, and how zealouſly (like them) he is affected with the moving of the Spirit.

With the holy Siſters deſire of Copulation (if he would ſeem Holy, Sincere, and Pure) were it with the Devill himſelf.

As alſo, the Amſterdammian definition of a Familiſt.



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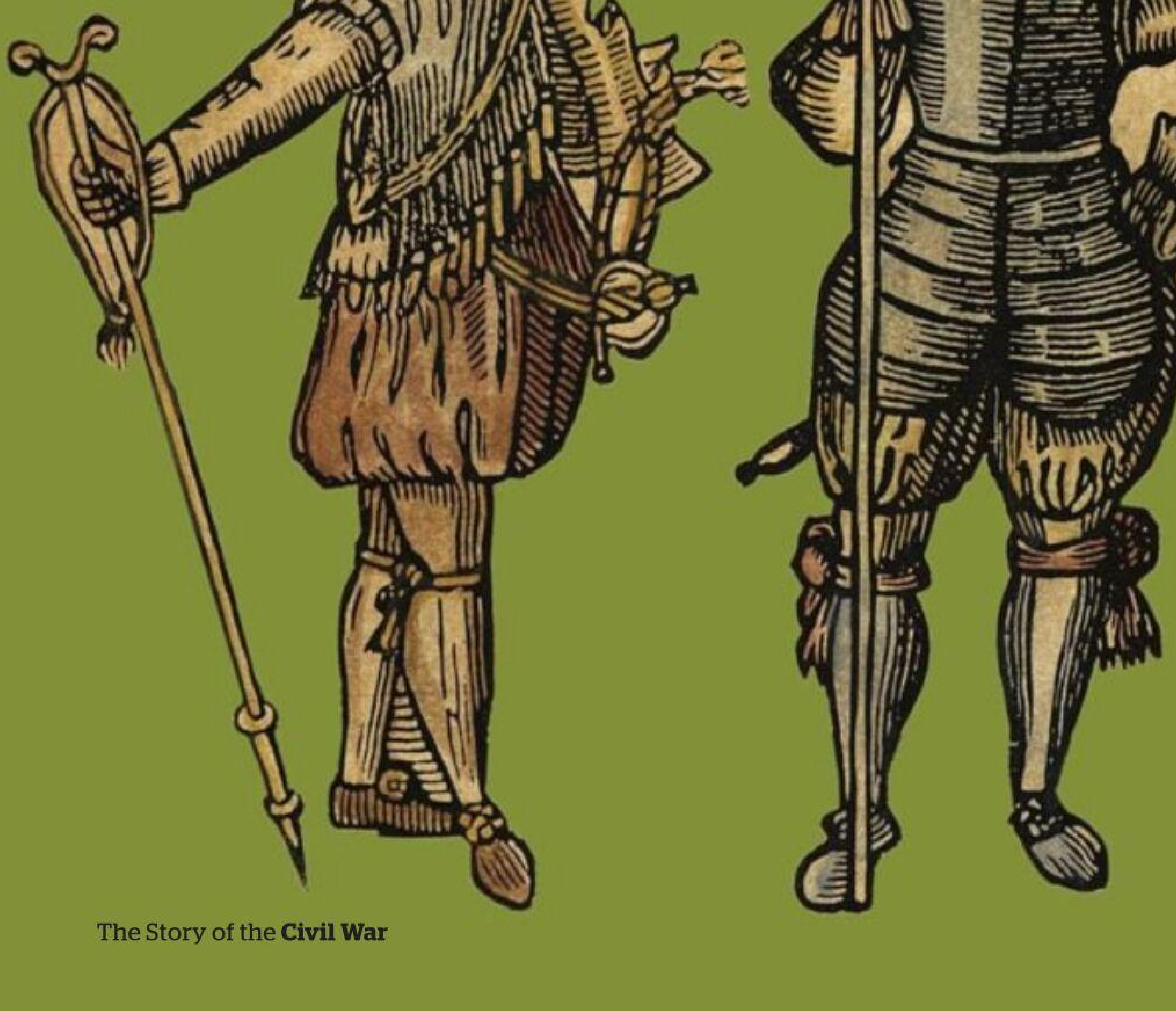
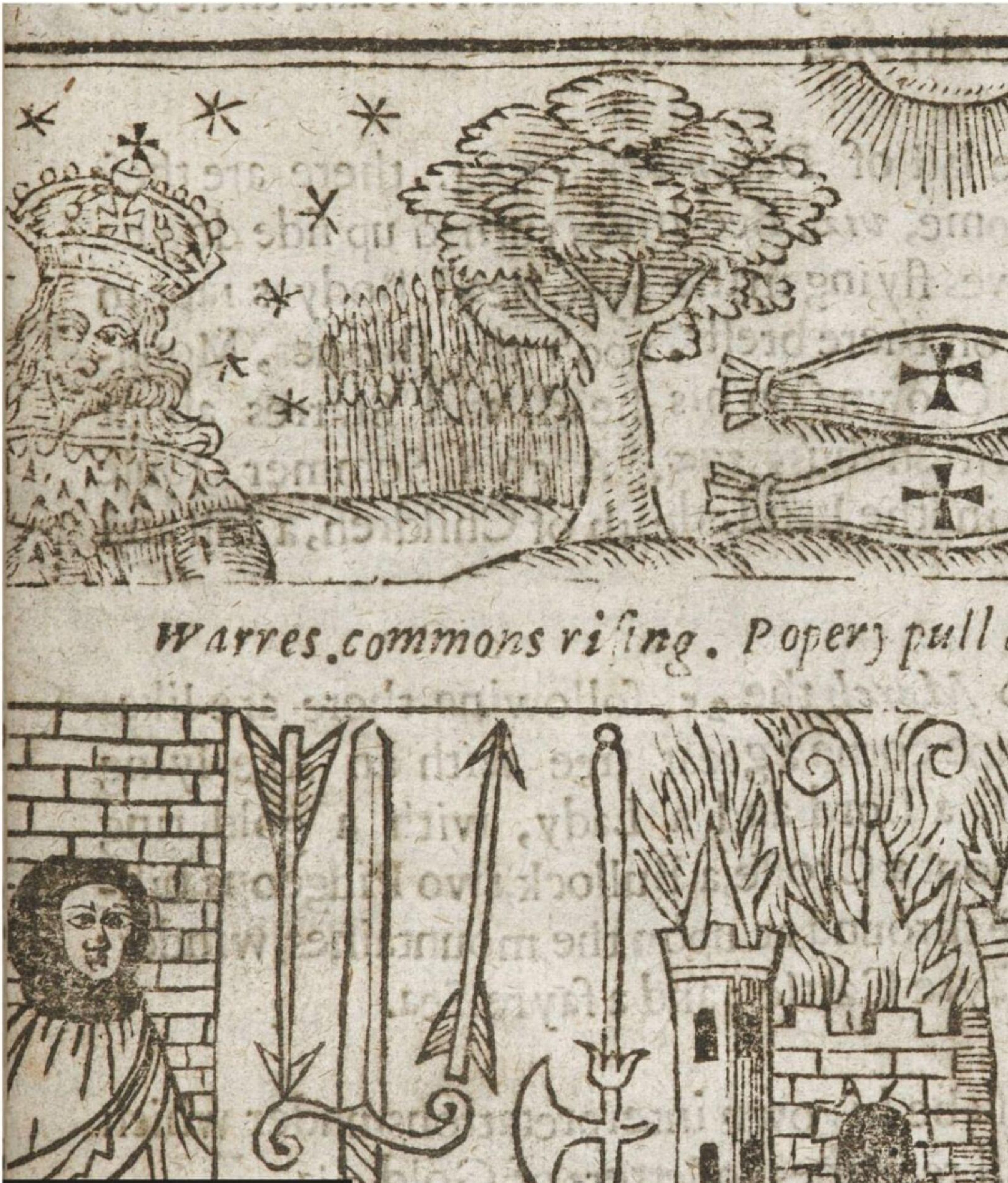


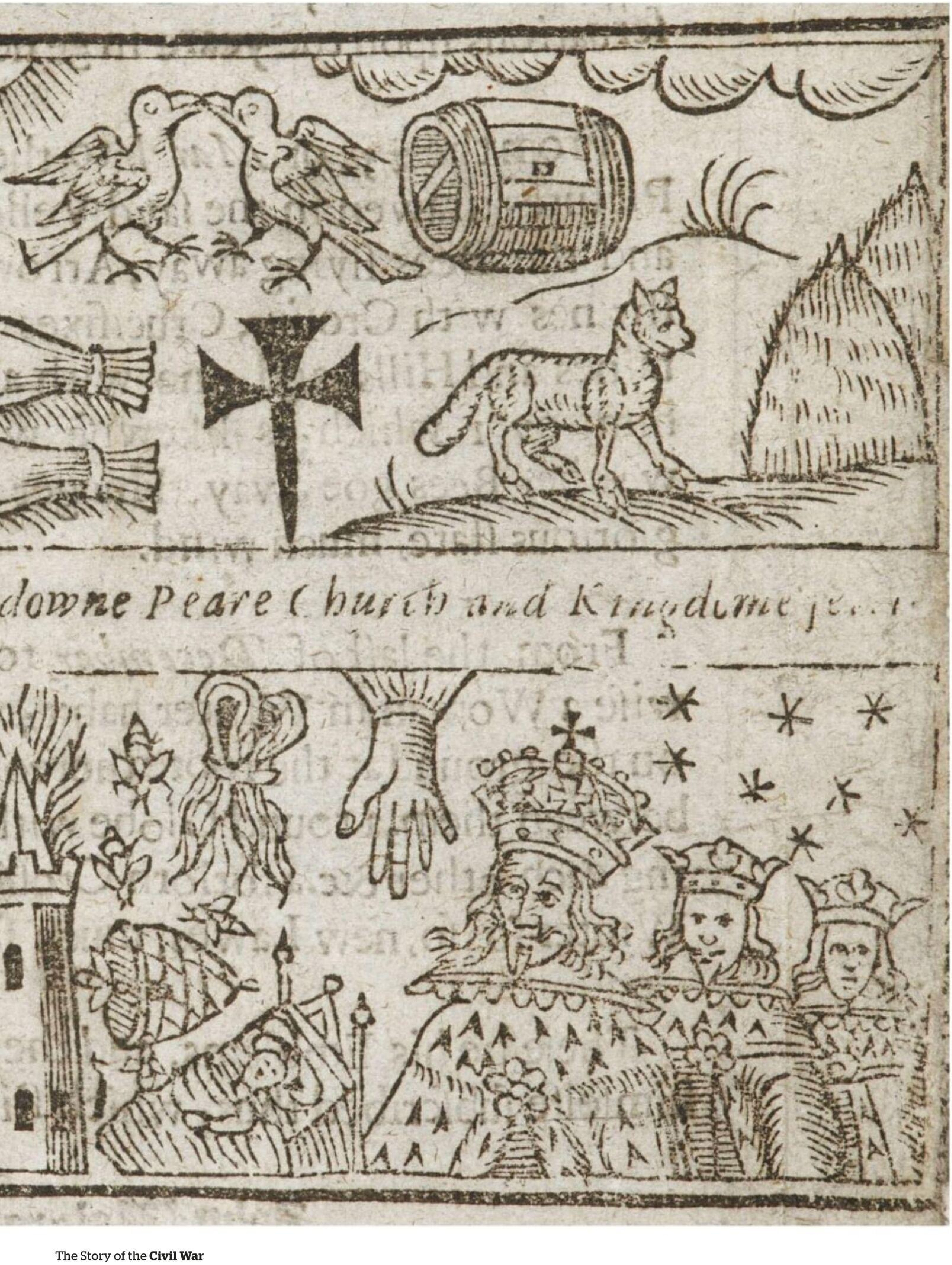
TOP LEFT ***The Devil Turn'd Round-Head*, a propaganda publication of 1642 at the start of the Civil War**
TOP RIGHT **Oliver Cromwell sits alongside the devil in a woodcut of 1660.**
LEFT **Contemporary illustrations of a royalist musketeer (left) and a parliamentarian pikeman**

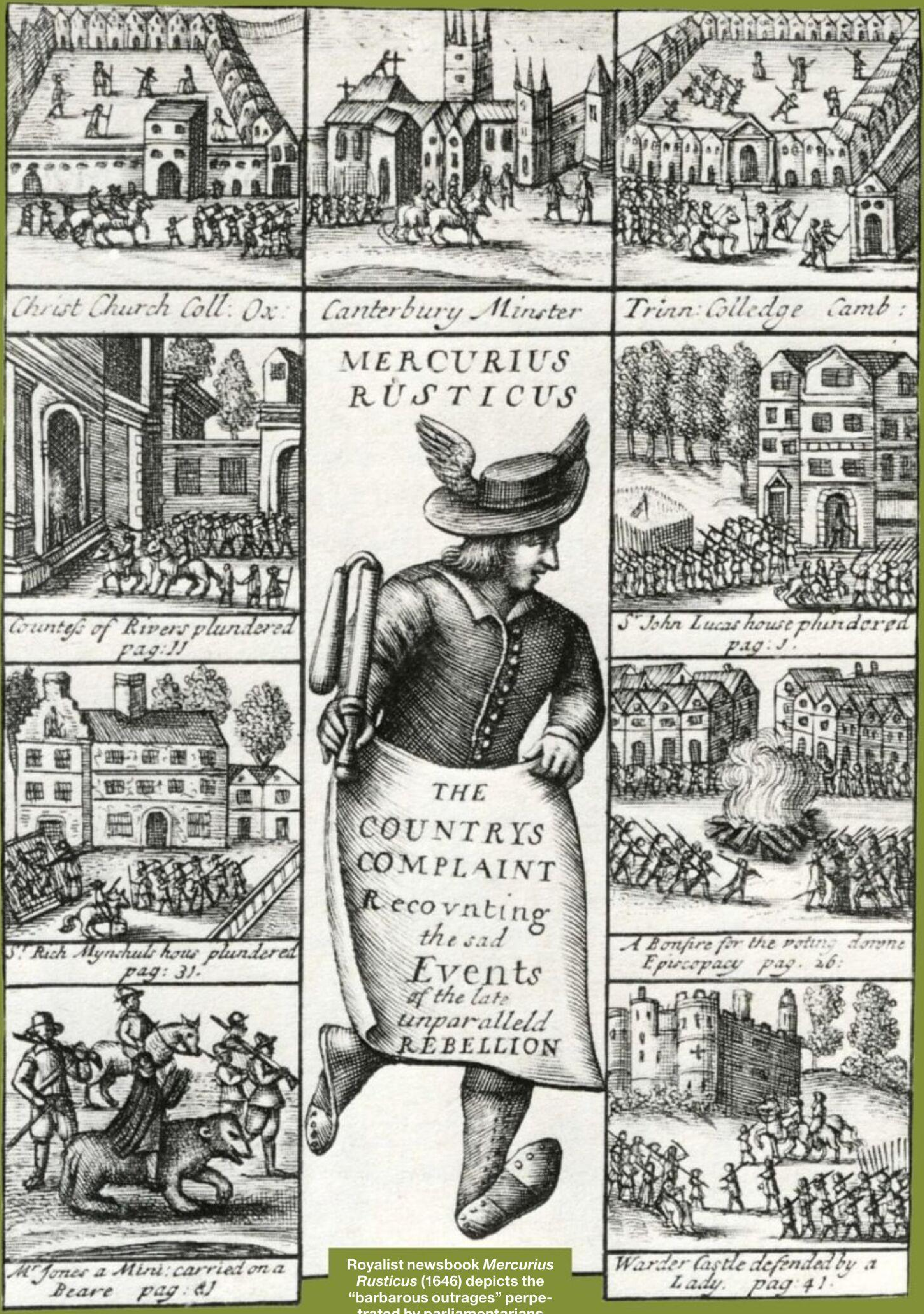
As martial ardour faded in all but the most zealous hearts, both sides were compelled to resort to 'impressment'



BRITISH LIBRARY-BRIDGMAN

An illustration on the front page of “The New Bloody Almanack”, a book of astrological predictions for 1644 and 1645, depicts many of the events that befell the country (and some that did not), including “Warres, commons rising... Townes fired, Feavers aplenty, a glorious State”


downe Peare Church and Kingdome


Christ Church Coll: Ox:
Canterbury Minster
Trinn: Colledge Camb:
MERCURIUS RUSTICUS
Counteſs of Rivers plundered pag: 11
Sr John Lucas house plundered pag: 1.
Sr Rich Mynshuls hous plundered pag: 31.
A Bonfire for the voting downe Episcopacy pag. 26:
THE COUNTRYS COMPLAINT Recovnting the sad Events of the late unparalleld REBELLION
Mr Jones a Mini: carried on a Beare pag: 61
Warder Castle defended by a Lady. pag: 41.

Royalist newsbook *Mercurius Rusticus* (1646) depicts the "barbarous outrages" perpetrated by parliamentarians

ALAMY

people of England and Wales because, as the fighting spread and intensified, so the human suffering it caused grew steadily, remorselessly worse.

"Thou wouldst think it strange if I should tell thee there was a time in England when brothers killed brothers, cousins cousins and friends their friends." So wrote the Hampshire gentleman Sir John Oglander, who lived through the war, in a later book of "observations" intended for his descendants, continuing: "Nay, when … to murder a man [was] held less offence than to kill a dog. I believe such times were never before seen in England, [with] no law and government, no assize [courts], no [quarter] sessions, [and] no justices [of the peace] that would be obeyed."

The general breakdown of law and order described by Oglander was one of the most terrifying aspects of the conflict for ordinary people, because it meant that, even as they were exposed to the depredations of hordes of unruly soldiers criss-crossing the countryside, they were also deprived of access to legal redress. In every corner of England, the soldiers looted and plundered, they "swaggered and roared", they drank and swore. They fathered illegitimate children, they broke up the homes of the unfortunate civilians with whom they were billeted, and in the worst cases they assaulted men, raped women and murdered anyone brave enough or foolish enough to stand in their way. Nor should we be surprised that so many of the soldiers behaved as outrageously as they did, because they themselves were generally wretchedly clothed, wretchedly fed and wretchedly underpaid.

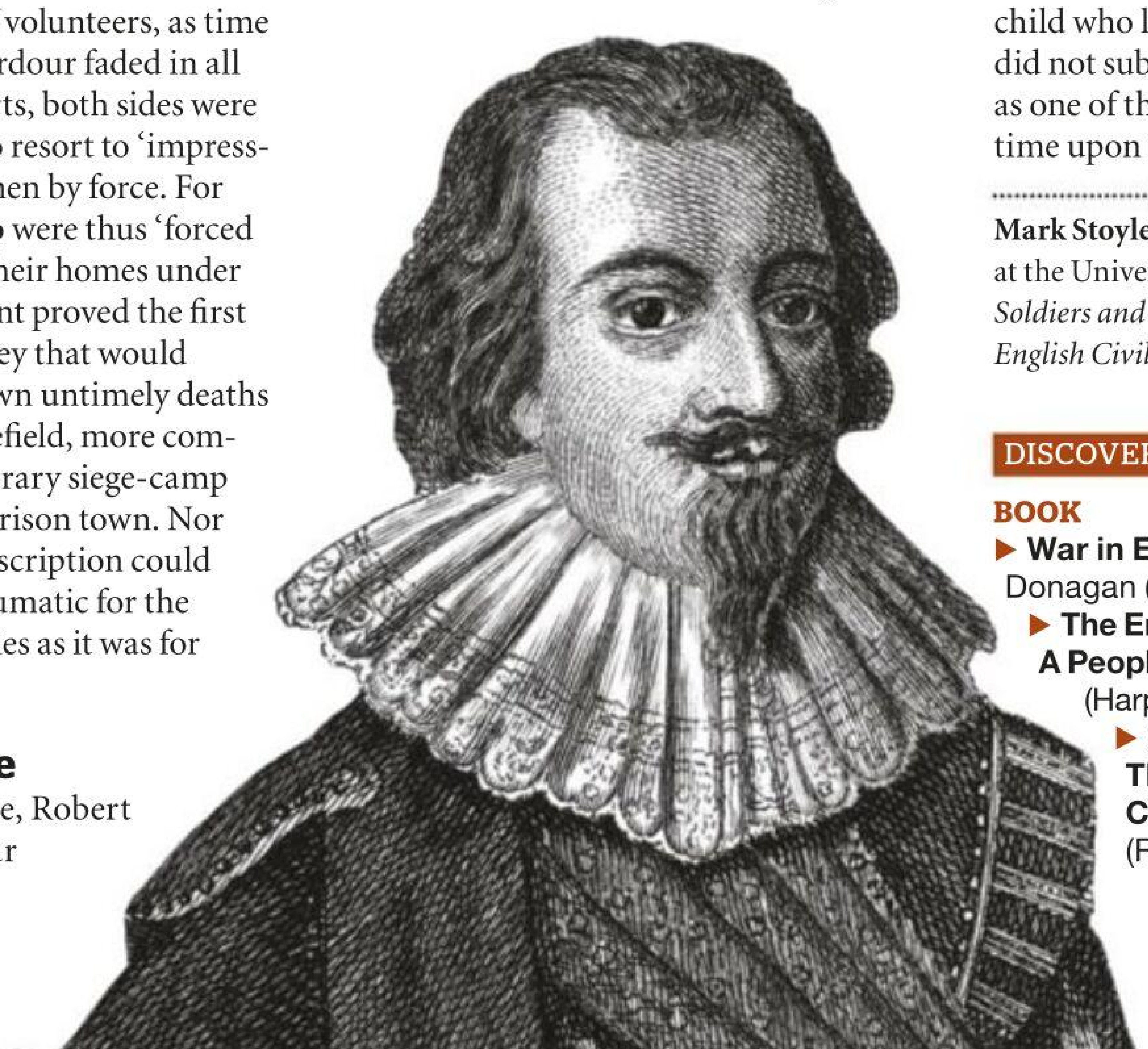
Whereas the armies raised in 1642 had been composed largely of volunteers, as time went on, and as martial ardour faded in all but the most zealous hearts, both sides were increasingly compelled to resort to 'impressment' – conscription of men by force. For all too many of those who were thus 'forced in', marched away from their homes under armed guard, impressment proved the first step on a miserable journey that would eventually lead to their own untimely deaths – sometimes on the battlefield, more commonly in a squalid temporary siege-camp or in a disease-ridden garrison town. Nor should we forget that conscription could often prove almost as traumatic for the impressed soldiers' families as it was for the soldiers themselves.

A homemade home

In early 1646, for example, Robert Culley of Owslebury, near Winchester, was impressed as a soldier "for the Parliament's service", leaving his wife, Dorothy, "in a poor condition… [with] two children to maintain, and nothing to relieve them, but some small goods". In the wake of Robert's departure, Dorothy managed to support herself and her children for a while by selling off most of her possessions, but she was unable to pay the rent for the house in which her husband had left them. At length, therefore, she was forced "to quit the house, and seek habitation elsewhere". Selling what few goods she still possessed, Dorothy "bought some small timber" and used it to "set up a cottage" on waste ground in Owslebury.

No sooner had she finished building this rudimentary shelter, however, than the leading parishioners – probably fearing that responsibility for maintaining the family would soon devolve upon them – began to agitate for the cottage to be demolished. In despair, Dorothy appealed to the local magistrates, doubtless hoping that, because they themselves professed to support the parliamentarian cause, they would be swift to help a parliamentarian soldier's wife in distress.

Tens of thousands of maimed soldiers were now quite unable to support their families



Sir John Oglander, who wrote in his book of "observations" that during the war "to murder a man [was] held less offence than to kill a dog"

ALAMY

Alas, the JPs' response was distinctly underwhelming. They asked the lord of the manor to look into the matter, but weakly concluded that, "if he should not... consent that the said cottage be continued, then it is thought fit… that the said Dorothy shall have liberty to carry away the timber and materials". This judgement can have been small comfort to Dorothy, and the sad story of the Culleys makes it easy to understand why family men were usually even more desperate to avoid impressment than were their single fellows.

By the time Dorothy Culley set to work with her "small timber" to build a new house for herself and her children, the Civil War was almost over. The royalists had been on the defensive ever since Charles I's main field army was shattered at the battle of Naseby in June 1645; a year later, the king finally gave up the fight and surrendered himself to his enemies. The guns then fell silent – for the time being, at least – but the terrible legacy of the conflict waged across England and Wales for almost four years would remain all too visible for decades to come.

It could be seen, for example, in the ruins of the scores of bridges that had been pulled down; in the burned-out shells of the thousands of houses that had been 'fired'; and, most pitiful of all, in the scars of the tens of thousands of maimed soldiers who had been hurt during the fighting and who were now quite unable to support themselves and their families. The mental scars inflicted by the struggle are far harder to trace, of course, but it seems fair to suggest that there can have been scarcely a man, woman or child who lived through the Civil War who did not subsequently remember that conflict as one of the defining experiences of their time upon this Earth.

Mark Stoyle is professor of early modern history at the University of Southampton, and author of *Soldiers and Strangers: An Ethnic History of the English Civil War* (Yale University Press, 2005)

DISCOVER MORE

BOOK

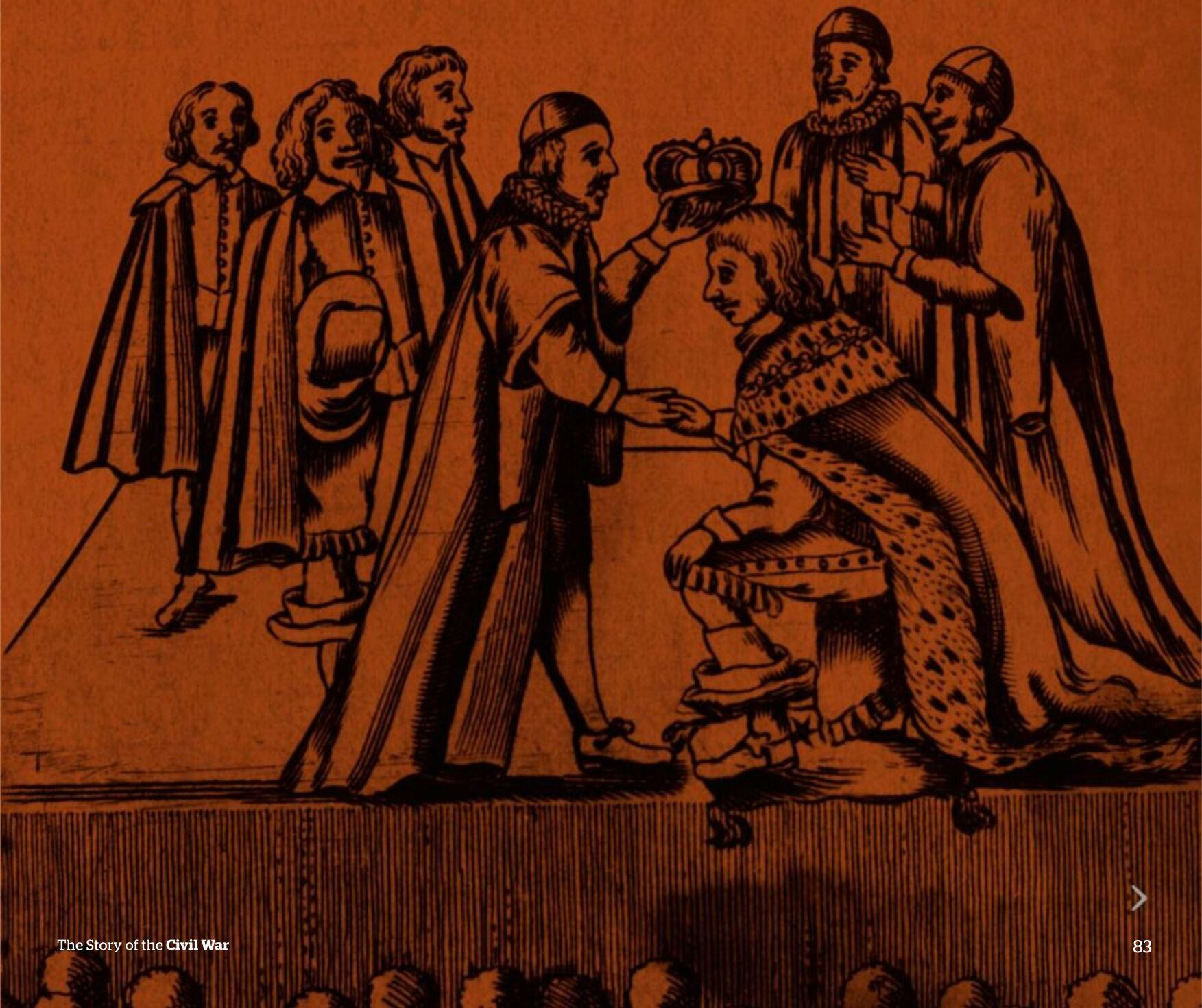
- **War in England 1642–49** by Barbara Donagan (Oxford University Press, 2008)
- **The English Civil War: A People's History** by Diane Purkiss (HarperCollins, 2006)
- **Going to the Wars: The Experience of the British Civil Wars** by Charles Carlton (Routledge, 1992)

LEGACY AFTER

- **Flight of Charles II**
  How the Stuart heir escaped his parliamentarian pursuers
- **The celebrity radical**
  John Lilburne, influential campaigner and pamphleteer
- **The Levellers' legacy**
  Did the Putney Debates really transform ideas of democracy?
- **Putting the Protector back into the Protectorate**
  A revised view of Oliver Cromwell's real role in government
- **Killers of the king**
  Follow the fates of the men who signed Charles I's death warrant
- **1660: the year that changed everything**
  Why the restoration of the monarchy transformed Britain

GETTY

AND MATH



HISTORY**EXPLORER**

Charles II's great escape

Charles Spencer and Charlotte Hodgman explore **Boscobel House** in Shropshire, where Charles II fled for his life after defeat to the forces of parliament

As dawn broke over Boscobel House on 6 September 1651, two figures hurried through the rain, heading for the safety of a huge, leafy oak tree about 150 yards away. They rapidly disappeared up the tree, hiding from sight behind the lush foliage of its thick branches. To anyone witnessing their movements, the pair would have made a curious sight. But onlookers would have been more astonished still by the identity of one of the two men. He was Charles II, king of Scotland, heir to the throne of England – and the most wanted man in the realm.

Our own trip to Boscobel, 366 years to the day after Charles's own stay, is drier but highly atmospheric. The oak tree that provided sanctuary for the Stuart heir as he hid from the parliamentary forces is long gone. But its roughly 250-year-old descendant – seeded from the original oak – has survived, and it is this tree that visitors see today. It's the closest we can come to the experiences of Charles II during his desperate flight.

Prince to peasant

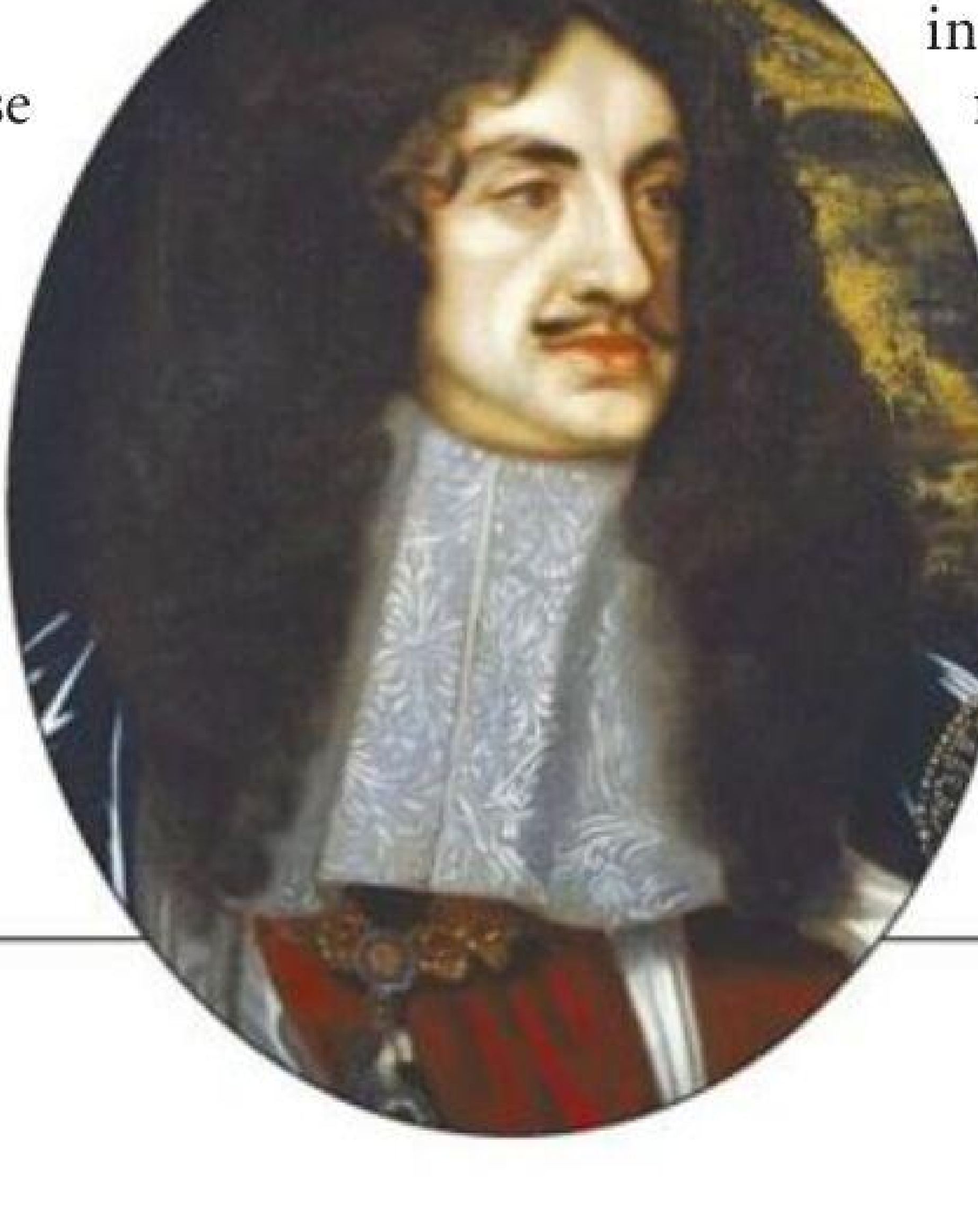
"Charles II is usually remembered as a lazy, mistress-loving king with a penchant for horses and pleasure," says Charles Spencer, whose recent book, *To Catch A King*, tells the story of Charles's great escape. "But in his youth he was a man of great bravery and leadership, a man who, even as a child, saw military action during the Civil War."

During that conflict Charles's father, Charles I, surrounded his son with seasoned soldiers and advisors. The king was desperate for the young prince to survive the Civil War so, as the tide began to turn against the Stuart cause, Charles was sent into exile – first to the Isles of Scilly and then on to Jersey before finally joining his mother, Henrietta Maria, at the French court.

"Charles hated his life in exile," says Spencer. "His mother treated him like a little boy rather than a king in waiting, and she was desperate to marry him off to the French princess Mademoiselle de Montpensier. But Charles was far from the master of seduction he would one day become, and there are wonderful accounts of his gaucheness at court. Needless to say, Henrietta Maria's matchmaking came to nothing, and the time Charles spent in exile only served to fuel his desire to return to England."

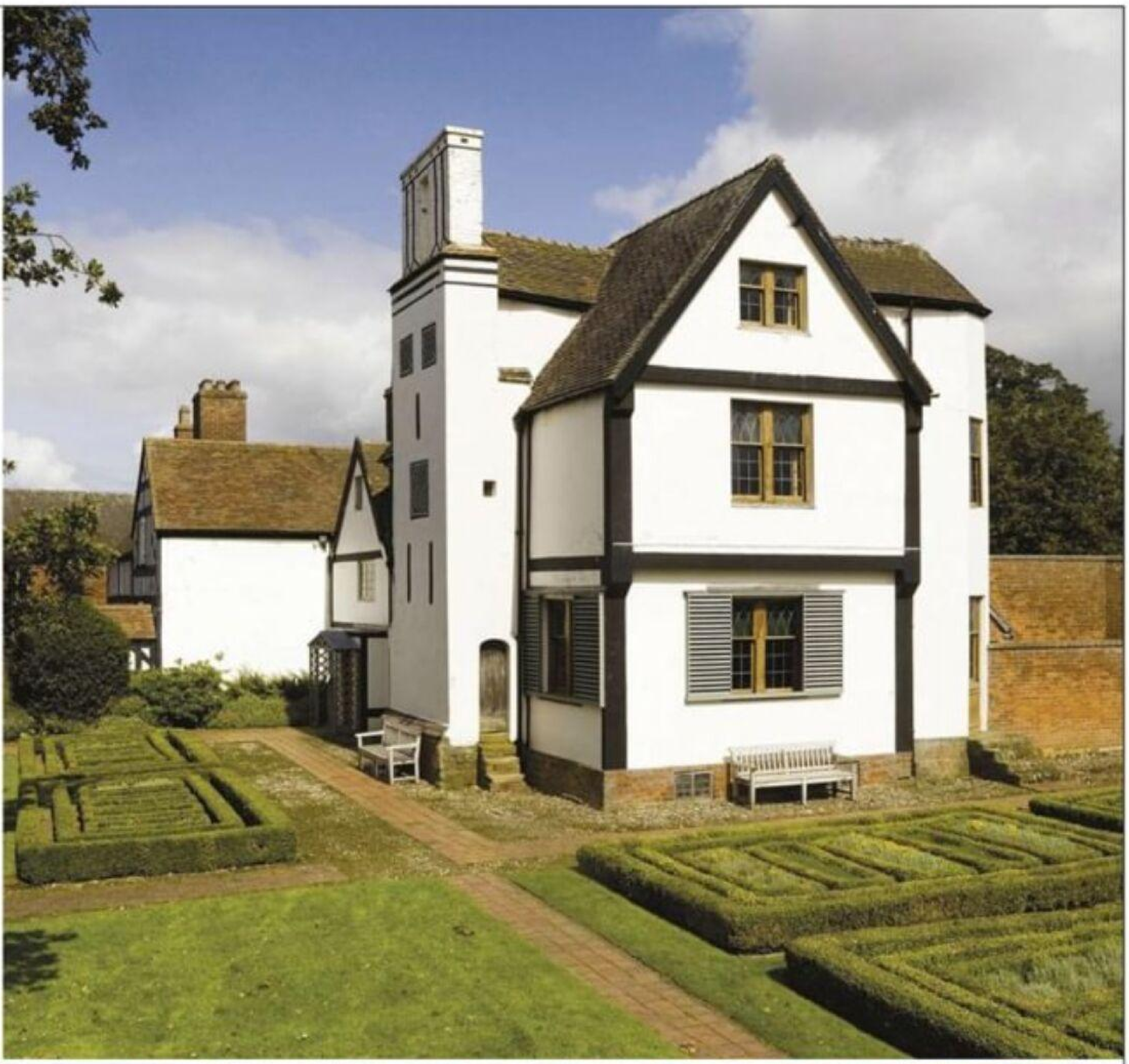
The question of how to regain the English throne haunted Charles. He was convinced that the only way to achieve it was through an alliance. Charles I had gone to the executioner's block in 1649, safe in the knowledge that he had remained true to his religious beliefs, refusing to sacrifice them for either the crown or his own head – but his son was willing to do almost anything to reclaim the throne.

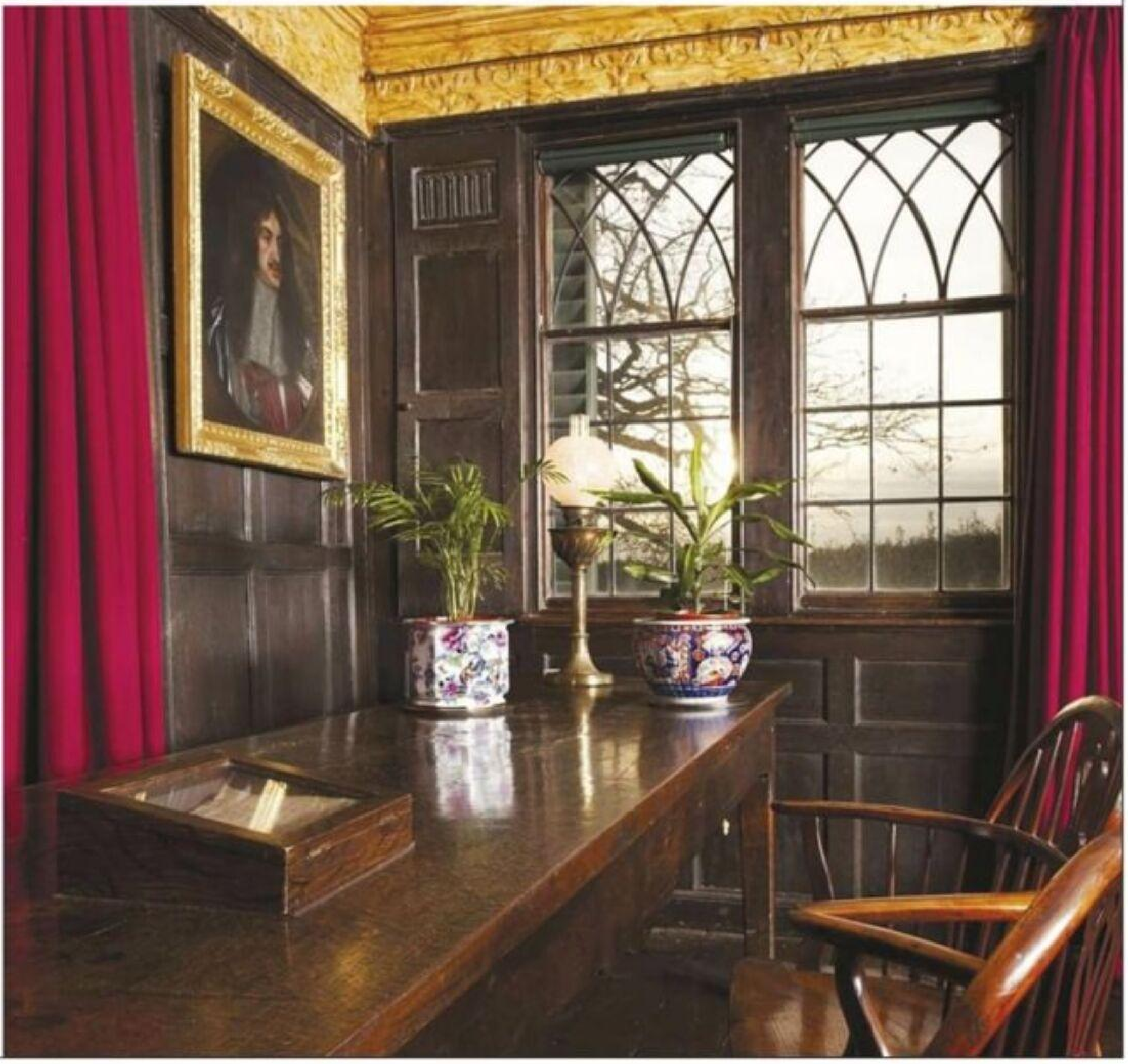
The young Charles had initially hoped to kickstart his campaign to seize the

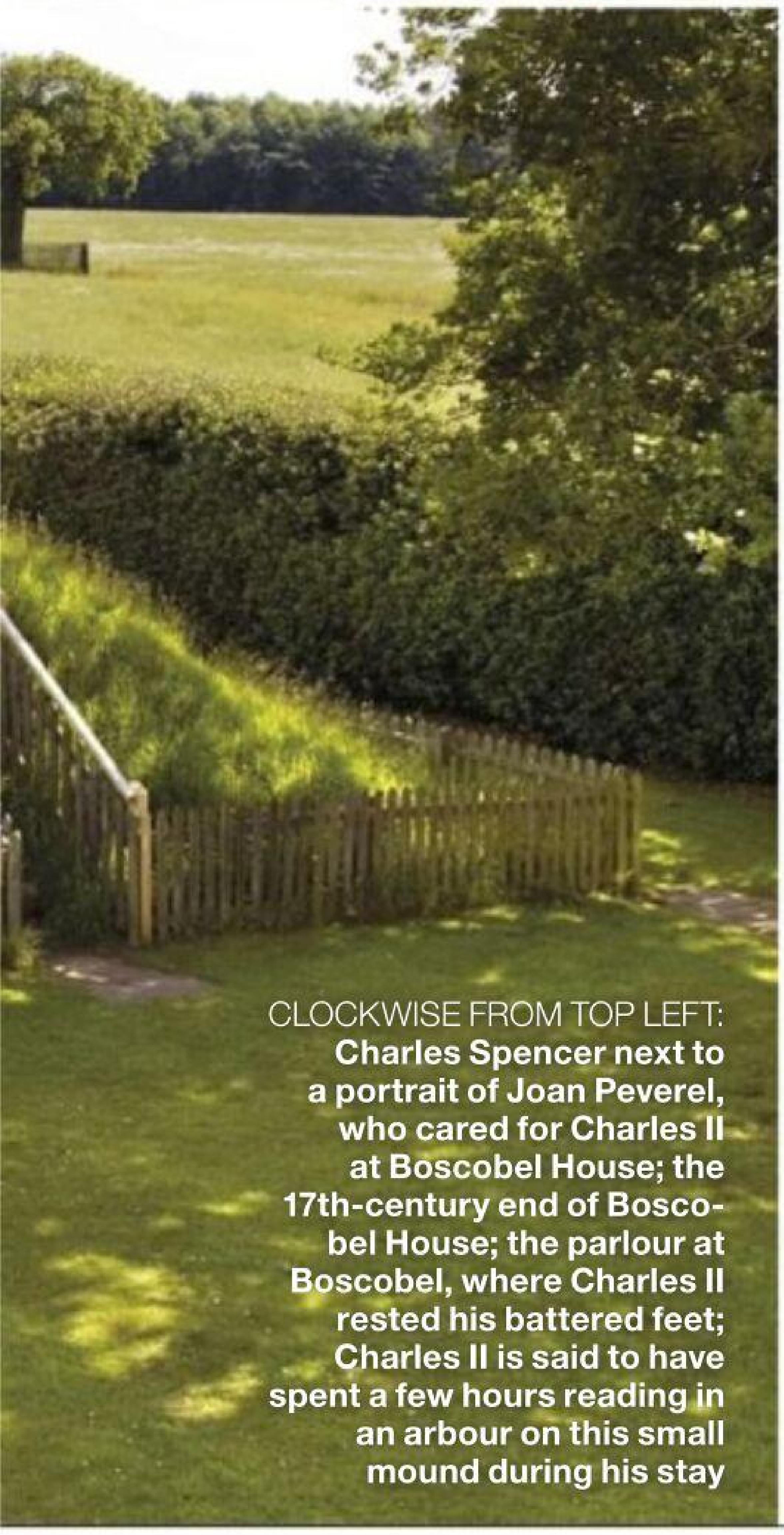


The 17th-century portrait of Charles II at Boscobel House

HISTORIC ENGLAND PICTURE LIBRARY/PHOTOGRAPHY: JANE E MOORE

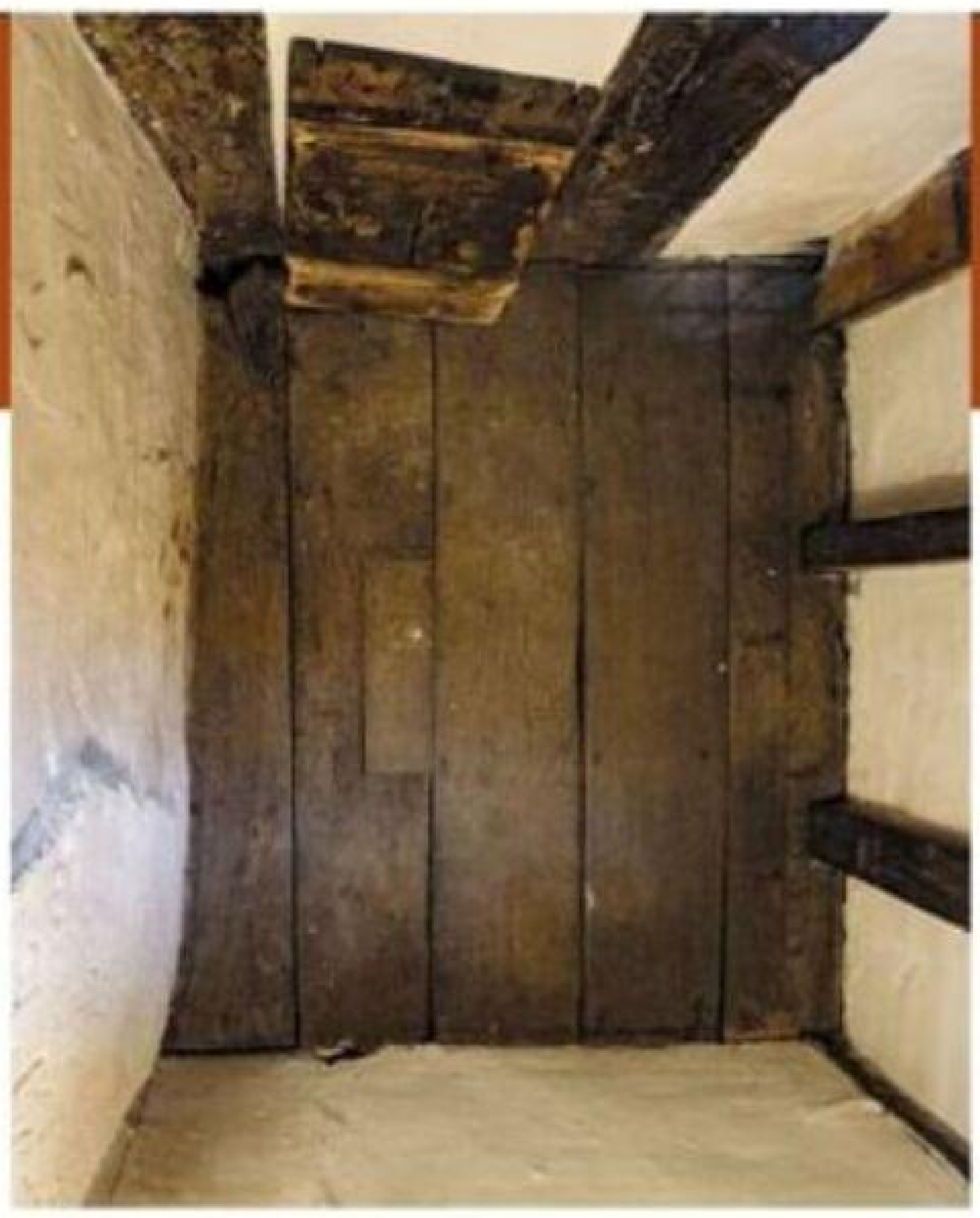






CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: **Charles Spencer next to a portrait of Joan Peverel, who cared for Charles II at Boscobel House; the 17th-century end of Boscobel House; the parlour at Boscobel, where Charles II rested his battered feet; Charles II is said to have spent a few hours reading in an arbour on this small mound during his stay**

Charles Spencer and the Royal Oak – a c250-year-old descendant of the original tree



A view looking up at the priest hole in Boscobel where Charles II spent the night

crown by allying with the Irish. When this failed, he turned to the Scottish Presbyterians for help. It was a controversial move, and one widely condemned by his father's former advisors.

"It is hard to fully understand the religious intensity felt by Scottish Presbyterians in the 17th century," says Spencer. "They were the adherents of a form of extreme Protestantism, and believed that kings, rather than being annointed by God, were actually sinners who should be governed by God's law. In an age of divine right, where monarchs were widely seen as God's representatives on Earth, it was a doctrine entirely at odds with Stuart beliefs. But Charles was a pragmatist and, while believing in his own sovereignty, accepted that he would have to sacrifice a degree of dignity and power in order to win the support of the Scots."

Pre-emptive strike

When Charles arrived in Scotland in June 1650, he swallowed his pride and formally agreed to Presbyterian demands, including promising to establish Presbyterianism as the national religion.

But the Presbyterians were the least of his problems. In England, parliamentarian leader Oliver Cromwell had learned of Charles's return and launched a pre-emptive strike on Scotland. The ensuing battle of Dunbar in September was a crushing defeat for the Scots: around 3,000 were killed and a further 10,000 taken prisoner. It was a bitter blow to the royalist cause, but Charles – who was subsequently crowned king of Scotland on 1 January 1651 – set about assembling a new army with which he could invade England and join up with his supporters.

"One of Charles's gravest errors was his failure to interpret the mood in England," says Spencer. "He was a returning Stuart king and this, in his opinion, should have been enough to make English royalists turn out for him in their droves. But when he did march into England, all people saw was an invading Scottish army, an army with a terrible reputation – whether deserved or not – for rape and pillage. The English had lived through a decade of civil war, resulting in the deaths of around 200,000 people. They had had enough. Charles was on his own."

As Charles progressed through England, he must have been shocked that none of his father's former royalist strongholds welcomed him. Even Oxford, the royalist capital where Charles I had set up his headquarters, refused to open its gates. Only Worcester welcomed the new king and his army.

Charles and his exhausted men stayed in Worcester for five days – a delay that would cost them dearly. Cromwell and his 38,000-strong New Model Army took the royalists by surprise, butchering them in their thousands. Charles, whose Scottish army numbered only around 16,000, was forced to flee the battlefield as one of the largest armies ever to fight on English soil crushed the royalists for good.

Stuart manhunt

As Charles fled Worcester, he begged his fellow soldiers to return to the battlefield. But his men knew the cause was lost, and their priority was now survival. The parliamentarians had placed a net of soldiers around Worcester to capture any Scots who had escaped the battlefield alive. Smuggling Charles past them and back into exile seemed a nigh-on impossible challenge.

"The first few days on the run were incredibly tough," says Spencer. "Charles – used to the finest footwear – was forced to disguise himself as a peasant, cramming his feet into rough shoes and cutting his long hair. His feet were ripped to shreds and he barely slept in his attempts to avoid capture. But he was tough and adaptable, and very quickly learned that England's underground Roman Catholic network would be his lifeline."

Charles's salvation came in the form of the Penderels, a family of Roman Catholic farmers living at Boscobel House, nearly 40 miles from Worcester. Having travelled through the night, Charles reached White Ladies Priory, which he had been told would serve as a good hiding place. The exhausted king was disguised as a woodman, his face darkened with soot. Fearing the arrival of parliamentarian soldiers, Richard Penderel, the eldest of five

JANE E MOORE/ALAMY/SHUTTERSTOCK

CHARLES WAS FORCED TO DISGUISE HIMSELF AS A PEASANT, CRAMMING HIS FEET INTO ROUGH SHOES AND CUTTING HIS LONG HAIR

VISIT

Boscobel House

Brewood, Bishop's Wood, Shropshire, ST19 9AR ● *english-heritage.org.uk*

brothers, was summoned to escort the king to Boscobel House, a remote location about a mile away with a long history of hiding persecuted Catholics.

"By the time Charles arrived at Boscobel, the parliamentarian net was closing in on him," says Spencer. "White Ladies had already been raided, and not even Boscobel would be safe for long.

"Charles was incredibly lucky to fall in with the Penderel family, who saw it as their divine mission to save the king. Without their help and local knowledge, Charles would have been lost, and there's no doubt he would have been executed if caught. But keeping the 6ft 2in-tall king hidden from sight was going to be a difficult task."

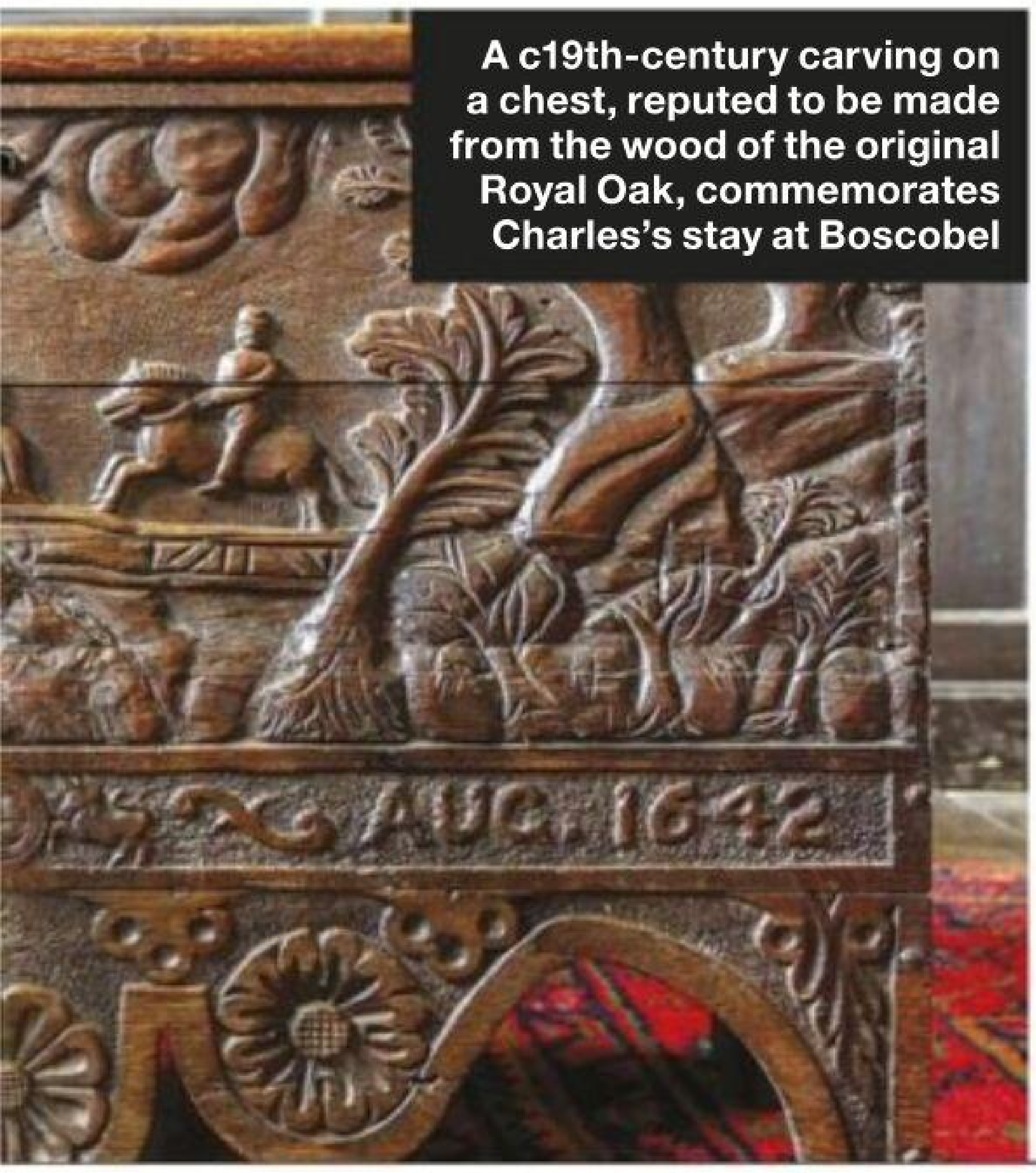
The royal oak

The timber-framed hunting lodge that forms part of Boscobel House was built in 1632 by Catholic recusant John Giffard, who converted an existing farmhouse on the site. Inside, a portrait of Charles II stares down from the parlour wall – a reminder that it was in this room that Charles's bloody feet were tended and his wet clothes and shoes laid out to dry in front of the fire.

Charles was joined at Boscobel by another royalist fugitive, William Careless, who had fought at his side at Worcester. It was Careless who suggested hiding in Boscobel's great oak tree for the day. "While we were in the tree we see soldiers going up and down in the thickest of the wood searching for persons escaped, we seeing them now and then peeping out of the woods," Charles II would later recall. At dusk, the pair returned to the house and Charles spent an uncomfortable night in a priest hole in the attic floor.

Charles knew if he stayed in Shropshire he would be caught, not least because there was a £1,000 reward for his capture. He was smuggled out of the county by a young woman named Jane Lane, whose brother was an officer in the royalist army. With Charles disguised as Lane's manservant, the pair travelled on horseback to Bristol in the hope of boarding a ship to France. When none could be found, they continued to Shoreham, near Brighton, where the king finally slipped out of England on 15 October.

"The six weeks he spent on the run were the most exciting of Charles's life," says Spencer. "He boasted endlessly about his escapade, and an account of his flight was written by none other than diarist Samuel Pepys. But he never forgot those who helped him through those dark days, and the Penderels and others were rewarded handsomely when Charles returned to England as king in 1660. He was a man of great bravery, but it is his loyal followers who are the real heroes of this incredible story." **H**



A c19th-century carving on a chest, reputed to be made from the wood of the original Royal Oak, commemorates Charles's stay at Boscobel

Charles Spencer (pictured) is the author of several books on the Civil War period. His most recent work is *To Catch A King: Charles II's Great Escape* (William Collins, 2017)

Words: Charlotte Hodgman

ON THE PODCAST

Charles Spencer discusses Charles II's great escape on our weekly podcast ▶**historyextra.com/podcasts**

CHARLES II: FIVE MORE PLACES TO EXPLORE

1 Scone Palace

PERTHSHIRE, SCOTLAND

Where Charles was crowned king

After agreeing to Presbyterian demands, Charles was crowned king of Scotland at Scone Palace on 1 January 1651, following the tradition of Scottish kings. The ceremony, which took place on Moot Hill, was Scotland's last coronation. *scone-palace.co.uk*

2 Worcester

WORCESTERSHIRE

Where the royalist cause was lost

The royalists suffered their final defeat at Worcester. Much of the battlefield itself is still open agricultural land; the top of the cathedral tower offers the best view of the site of the clash, while the Civil War visitor centre in the Commandery gives an interesting background to the period. *visitworcestershire.org*

3 White Ladies Priory

COSFORD, SHROPSHIRE

Where Charles II hid from enemies

The ruins of the 12th-century White Ladies Priory are a 20-minute walk from Boscobel House. Charles arrived here early on 4 September 1651 after riding through the night following the battle of Worcester. The priory itself no longer exists but the ruins of its medieval church can still be visited. *english-heritage.org.uk*

4 Moseley Old Hall

WOLVERHAMPTON, WEST MIDLANDS

Where the king used a priest hole

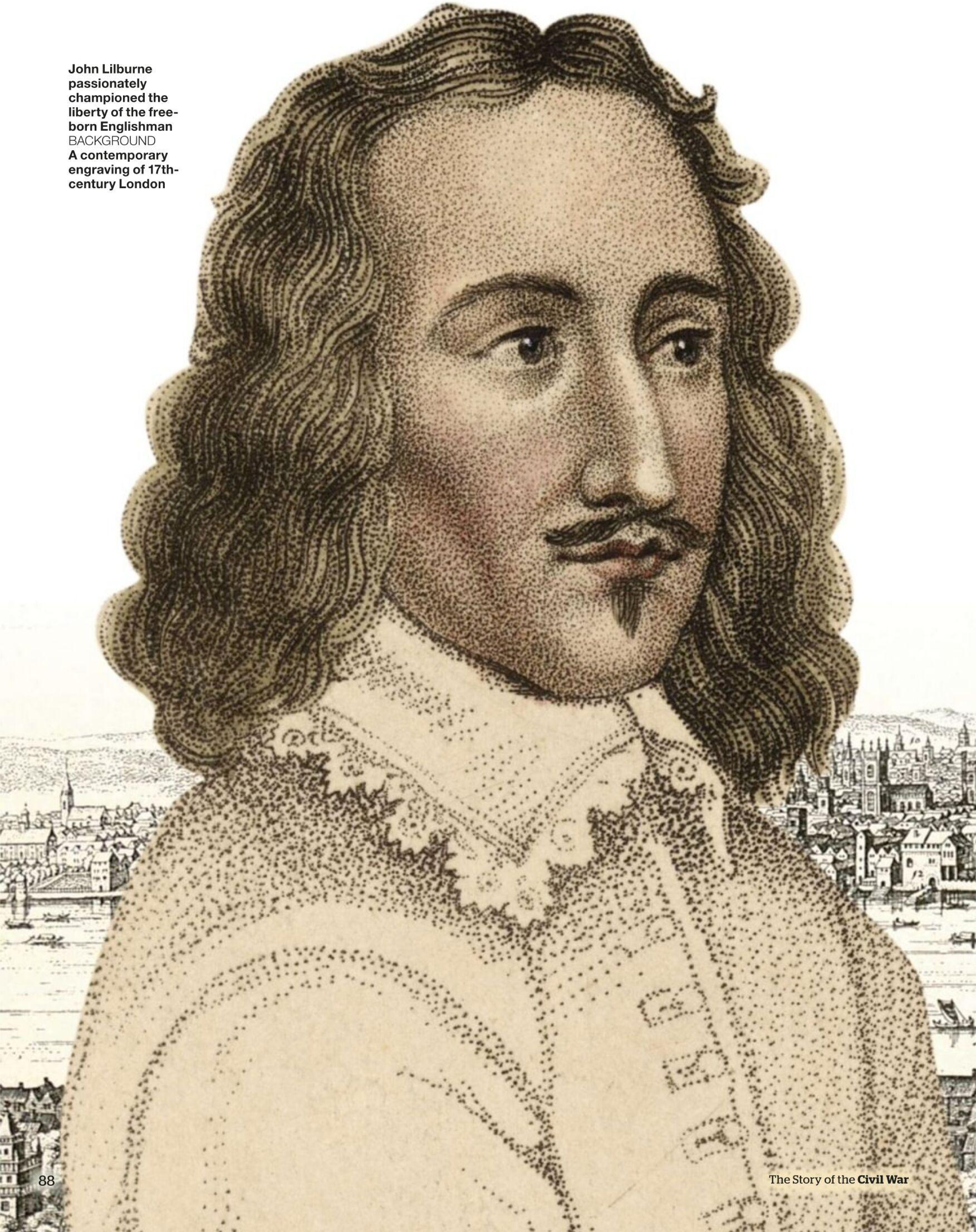
After he left Boscobel, Charles headed for Moseley Old Hall where he stayed for several days. The house still contains the four-poster bed in which the king slept. The famous priest hole, where Charles hid when parliamentarian soldiers came to the house, is also visible, and the exhibition room has a letter sent by Charles II to Jane Lane thanking her for her assistance in helping him escape to France. *nationaltrust.org.uk/moseley-old-hall*

5 The Monarch's Way

NATIONWIDE

Where Charles made his escape

You can follow the escape route taken by Charles II on this 625-mile walking trail that snakes from Worcester to Shoreham via Boscobel, Mosley, Bristol and Yeovil. The path is signed with yellow waymarks. *monarchsway.50megs.com*



John Lilburne passionately championed the liberty of the free-born Englishman BACKGROUND **A contemporary engraving of 17th-century London**

THE CELEBRITY **RADICAL**

The 1640s were turbulent years in England – in part due to the radical activities of John Lilburne. **Mike Braddick** explores the life and fame of 'Free-Born John'

GETTY/AKG

FLVVIVS
Warke

Having been convicted of publishing offensive religious tracts, Henry Burton, Dr John Bastwick and William Prynne were sentenced to stand in the pillory and have their ears cropped. Prynne's ears had already been cropped, but the remaining stumps came off nonetheless, and his cheeks were branded. Burton's left ear was cut so close to his head, and so clumsily, that he lost a lot of blood. In the course of his ordeal, he looked down at a young apprentice, John Lilburne, and asked: "Son, son, what is the matter? You look so pale."

It was 1637, the height of King Charles I's personal rule (the period from 1629 to 1640 during which parliaments did not meet), when resentments were accumulating about the king's arbitrary use of royal power and the 'popish' religious policies championed by his archbishop of Canterbury, William Laud. This was a time when Henry VIII's Reformation was still a not too distant memory and the debate about the nature of further reform of the church was very much alive.

During and after their brutal public mutilations, Burton, Bastwick and Prynne became 'puritan martyrs'. Puritan was often a term of abuse or ridicule that emerged in Elizabethan England, and meant little more than a desire to see further reform in the English church. What drove such people into this position varied from time to time and puritan to puritan. In this case, the puritan martyrs enjoyed public support and won a significant moral victory. The end of Charles's personal rule was brought about by revolt in Scotland against a new prayer book, which later led to the recall of parliament. When it met in November 1640, one of its first acts was to release the three men, and their triumphal entries into London were a considerable embarrassment to the crown.

Lilburne, pale-faced witness to Burton's mutilation, was to turn this model of Christian suffering to more secular ends over the course of a remarkable political career. His purpose was to protect the hard-won liberties of the free-born Englishman. A tireless self-publicist, his career was inextricably linked with publishing, from his first prosecution for distributing seditious tracts by Bastwick, through a career as a pamphleteer, writing more than 150 titles. He also joined demonstrations, confronted authority and signed up for the parliamentary army. His sufferings were not passive but were almost invited.

His response to prosecution was to challenge those ranged against him

From these two disparate elements – Christian suffering and print – Lilburne forged a career as 'Free-born John'. Recent scholarship has tended to marginalise him as unrepresentative of mainstream opinion and of limited political influence. But his career is revealing of the new ways of conducting politics that emerged from, and contributed to, the crisis of the 1640s, a time alive with fears about the future of liberty and religion. Opinion was mobilised in print and on the streets in highly demonstrative ways to influence decisions taken in parliament, at the royal court and by the army. This maelstrom of opinion caused anxiety and fostered creativity. It gave the 1640s its intellectual and political richness – but also its institutional instability.

Lilburne embraced this crisis and its possibilities, becoming the first celebrity radical – a forerunner of John Wilkes, the great 18th-century radical and agitator for constitutional freedoms, among others. He and his allies used his challenges as demonstrations of general, secular political principles, seeking to defeat and to shame those in power.

Going underground

Lilburne was born around 1615. In 1630 he went to London, home to a lively puritan underground, and was apprenticed to a godly clothier. A friend of his master took him to visit Bastwick in jail, and he became involved in the world of underground publication.

This led, by 1638, to his first brush with the law, a prosecution for importing "scandalous" and "factious" books. In court he refused to take an oath to tell the truth, on the grounds that Christians should not make oaths and that this particular oath might not be legal. This challenge to the powers ranged against him was his characteristic response to prosecution. Outraged, the court sentenced him to be whipped from the Fleet prison to New Palace Yard at Westminster, there to be pilloried before being imprisoned until he conformed. In another move that was to become familiar, he launched combatively into print, with pamphlets called *The Christian mans Triall* and *A worke of the Beast*. His vigorous public campaign and fortitude made him a public figure, and he was the subject of an engraved portrait by George Glover.

Who were the Levellers?

Evolution of Lilburne's revolutionaries

The radical political movement that became known as the Levellers comprised a group of men united by ideas of equality, political reform and religious freedom. The name was applied to them by opponents as a pejorative label, implying that they intended to 'level' landowners' estates. It was later adopted by at least some of the men involved.

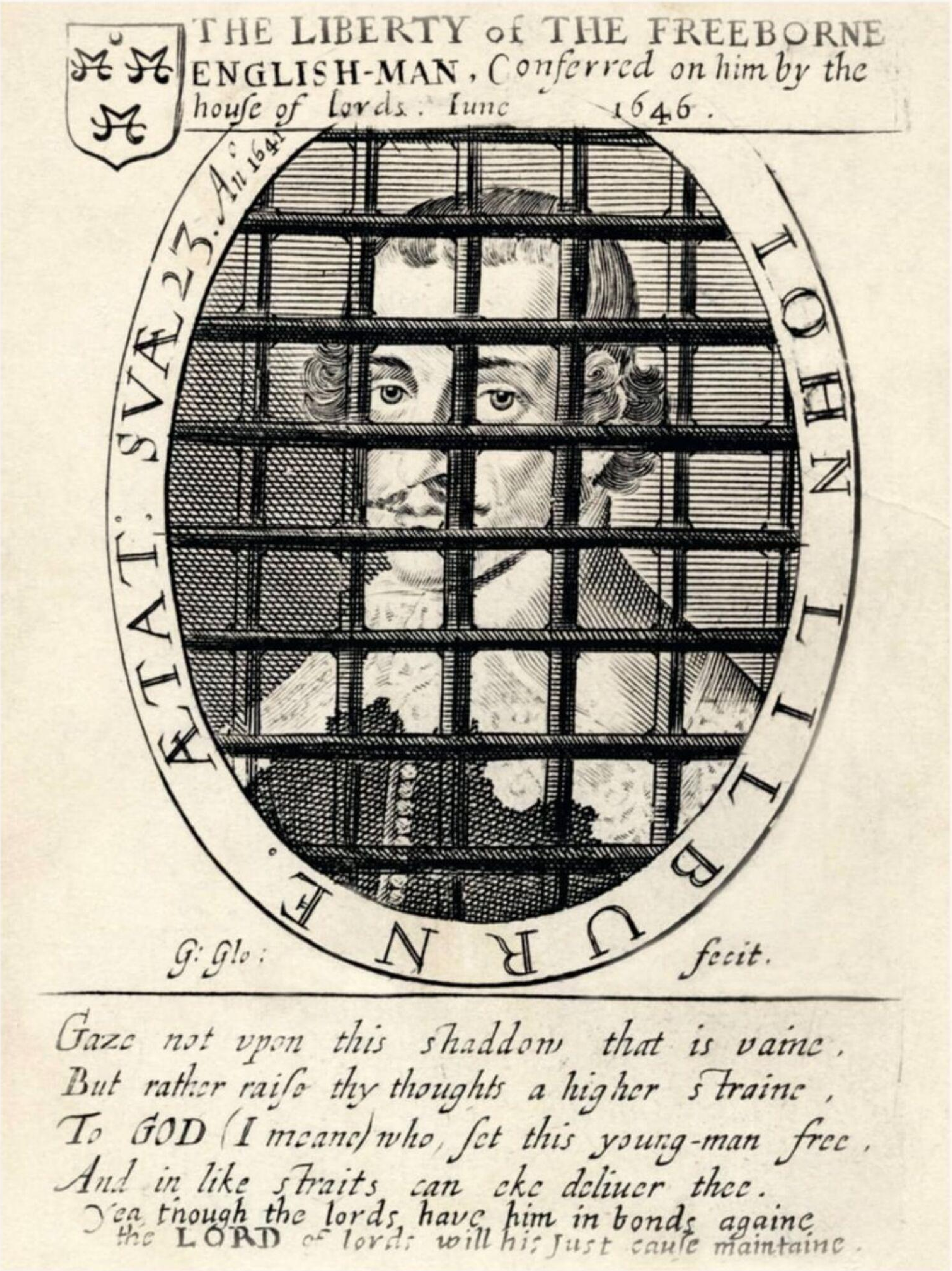
The movement stemmed from the ideas of political radicals including John Lilburne, Richard Overton, William Walwyn and Sir John Wildman. Having initially supported parliament's cause, as the Civil War progressed they became disillusioned by the way power was used by Cromwell's government, and by Puritan religious oppression .

In a series of pamphlets from 1645, and particularly after Lilburne's arrest in 1646, these radicals promoted an agenda demanding, among other things, that the House of Lords be disbanded and authority placed with the Commons, where seats should be redistributed and voted for by many, perhaps even all, men; that parliament should be subject to biennial elections; equality and economic reform in the interests of small property-holders; and individual religious freedom. These were key elements in *An Agreement of the People*, discussed at the Putney Debates in 1647.

A lack of action by parliament fuelled Leveller support in the New Model Army. After Leveller soldiers refused to fight in Ireland and mutinied, the movement was suppressed and its military elements crushed at Burford, Oxfordshire, in 1649. Lilburne and other leaders were arrested the same year, effectively destroying the movement as a political force.

Between 1640 and 1642 Lilburne was present in the crowds that surged around parliament (on one occasion with a sword in his hand), demanding redress of the grievances of King Charles I's unpopular period of personal rule. One of the key targets was Sir Thomas Wentworth, Earl

TOPFOTO


THE LIBERTY of THE FREEBORNE ENGLISH-MAN, Conferred on him by the houſe of lords. Iune 1646.
IOHN LILBURNE
ÆTAT: SVÆ 23. Ao 1641
G: Glo: fecit.
Gaze not vpon this ſhaddow that is vaine,
But rather raiſe thy thoughts a higher ſtraine,
To GOD (I meane) who ſet this young-man free,
And in like ſtraits can eke deliuer thee.
Yea though the lords haue him in bonds againe
the LORD of lords will his Juſt cauſe maintaine.

This portrait was part of a Levellers' campaign to free Lilburne in 1646 of Strafford, who had been the king's chief minister in Ireland and was associated with the most authoritarian aspects of Charles's domestic policies.

Strafford was charged with treason, and among the charges was the – almost certainly false – suggestion that he had advised Charles to use an army raised in Ireland to bring order to his English parliament. In a crowd calling for justice on Strafford in May 1641, Lilburne uttered words that led to an accusation of treason against him. Unsurprisingly, he was quick to sign up when civil war broke out, and he fought at the first major battle, at Edgehill in October 1642.

His military career was interrupted by capture at Brentford in November 1642 and a charge of treason. He left the army in 1645 on a matter of conscience, refusing to swear the Solemn League and Covenant, which bound together the English parliamentarians and Scottish Presbyterians. The Scots sought a national church in England, similar to the kirk in Scotland, in which authority rose from the congregations, in the election of elders who sat in regional and national bodies regulating the Church. This guaranteed order, since it was a national church, but to its supporters it was a remedy for the corruptions of church government by bishops and kings, which was little better than the authority of the pope had been. But for the English, this kind of church settlement was not what they had taken up arms to achieve.

Instead, many English people wanted full congregational independence, while others were willing to see the retention of bishops, with modified powers. For the parliamentarians, the Solemn League and Covenant was a military treaty more than a union of the churches, and the alliance was difficult to maintain in the next couple of years.

Lilburne was by this time a political ally of the rising star Oliver Cromwell, opposing the lukewarm pursuit of military victory and the replacement of bishops by a national Presbyterian church. Lilburne's printed contributions to disputes over these issues led to conflict with Prynne and Bastwick, among others, but also to an accusation of slander against the Speaker of the Commons. For his troubles, he was imprisoned once again.

This experience led to a dramatic ideological escalation. In *The copy of a letter … to a friend* he argued that supreme power in the land lay in the Commons, representative of the people for whose interest and freedoms it was responsible. He was not on the side of parliament against the king, but on the side of the people against tyranny, including that exercised by parliaments. This position fired the Leveller campaigns and led him into conflict with every subsequent regime.

The Levellers promoted a settlement based on popular sovereignty

Imprisoned from July 1646 until August 1648, Lilburne became the focus for a public petitioning campaign for the rights of the people, from which emerged the Leveller movement. In alliance with army radicals who felt betrayed by their parliamentary masters, and through petitions and pamphlets, the Levellers promoted a settlement based on popular sovereignty. They wanted not only restrictions on the monarchy but parliamentary reform to create a genuine representative of the people. These principles were to be enshrined in *An Agreement of the People*, licensing government but also restricting its powers over its citizens.

After the king

This campaign was continually frustrated by more pragmatic politicians. In 1649, Charles was executed, and the monarchy and the House of Lords were both abolished; that year was declared to be "the first year of England's freedom by God's blessing restored".

The Commons had legislated without the Lords or royal assent, declaring themselves to be representative of the people. But the refusal to pass *An Agreement of the People* fuelled radical discontent, announced in print by Lilburne's pamphlet *England's new chains discovered*. Pamphlets, petitions and mutinous soldiers threatened the stability of the new regime and, in the course of these conflicts, Lilburne denied the legitimacy of the new government and incited armed resistance. He was charged with treason again in October 1649, but was acquitted by the jury.

Having survived such challenges, Lilburne tried to live a quiet life as a soap boiler, but his involvement in local campaigns led to accusations of renewed Leveller agitation. He also became embroiled in a conflict with Sir Arthur Hesilrige, a parliamentarian and war hero, who was in dispute with Lilburne's uncle over confiscated lands. Again, Lilburne fought on general principles and, in an outspoken pamphlet, questioned Hesilrige's integrity. His publication was deemed libellous: without indictment or hearing, he was fined and banished – a grotesque over-reaction that testified to the public nuisance he now represented.

Banishment was not the end of him. In 1653 Cromwell dismissed the Rump Parliament, the body responsible for the revolution of 1649, hoping for faster progress in secular reform and godly reformation. Lilburne took the opportunity to return. His prosecution, he claimed, had died with the Rump, which had declared him guilty. In the ensuing treason trial he was again protected by a jury that refused to find him guilty of a crime worthy of death, and the level of public support made it unwise for the authorities to argue. Lilburne was imprisoned in the Tower of London and then on Jersey. He returned in October 1655, by that point quite ill, and was held at Dover Castle. In his final days he was said to have renounced his activism, and was let out on parole. He died in Kent on 29 August 1657.

Lilburne had a gift for seeing in his own sufferings and misfortunes threats to the public good in general. Such people are not easy to live with or work with, but he was undoubtedly a heroic figure. Apparently casual about his personal safety, he consistently challenged powers of which he disapproved, and eschewed compromise.

Lilburne's wife, Elizabeth, was also a prominent campaigner, pleading for these causes on behalf of their household, and sometimes living with him in prison. Lilburne and his allies probed the ambiguities, compromises, anxieties and possibilities of revolutionary politics. He contributed copiously to the flood of pamphlets that was both a symptom and a cause of the turmoil of the era. H

Mike Braddick is professor of history at the University of Sheffield. His new book, *The Common Freedom of the People: John Lilburne and the English Revolution,* will be published in 2018 by Oxford University Press

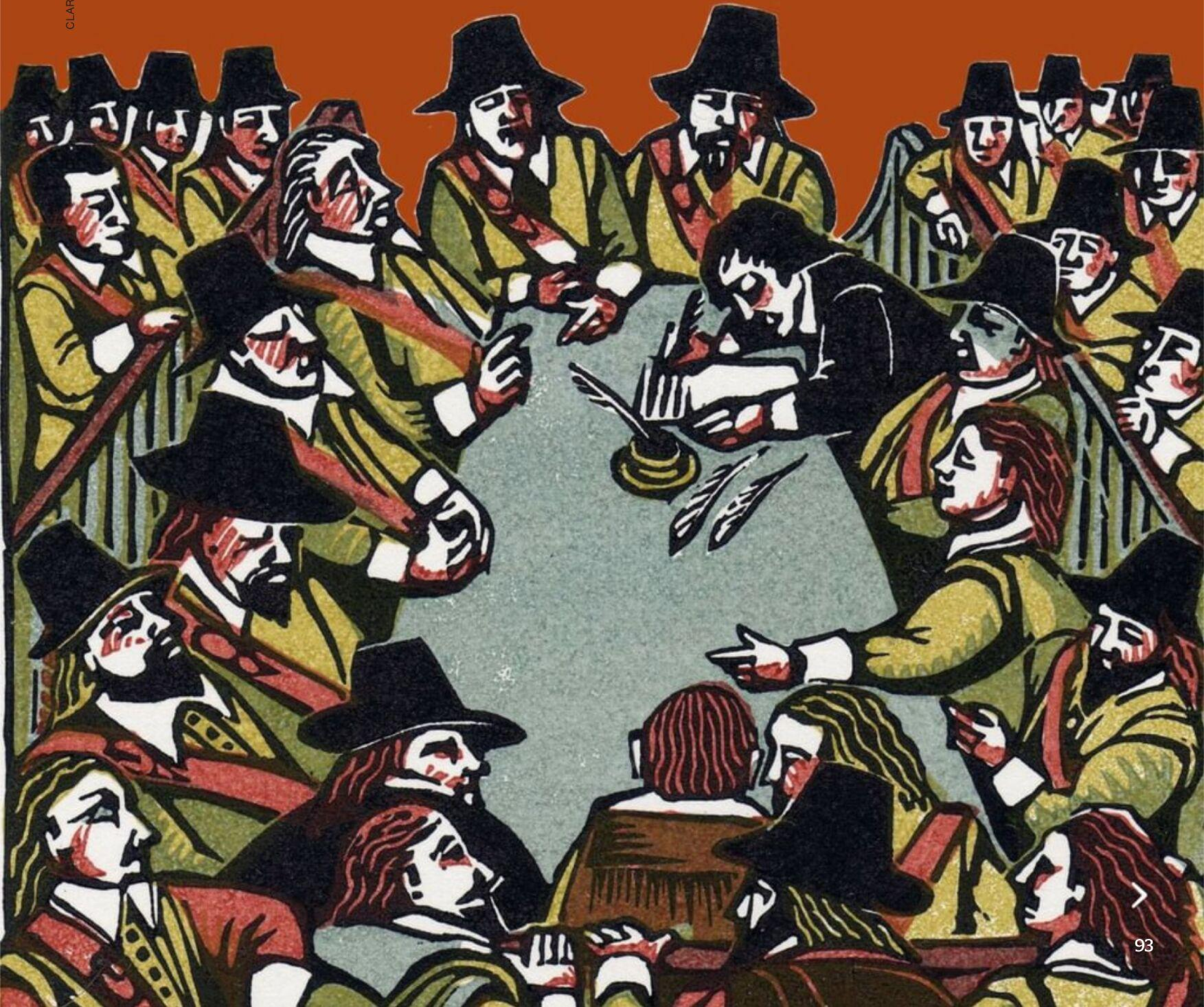
DISCOVER MORE

BOOK

- ▶ **Free-born John: A Biography of John Lilburne** by Pauline Gregg (Phoenix Press, 2000)
- ▶ **The Leveller Revolution** by John Rees (Verso, 2016)

THE LEVELLERS' LEGACY?

The radical participants of the Putney Debates laid the foundations of democracy. But their significance has been distorted, argues **Ted Vallance**



CLARE MELINSKY

The celebrated Marxist historian EP Thompson wrote his classic history of English working-class radicals to save them from the "condescension of posterity". Yet in recent years it has increasingly seemed that historians must write to save radicalism from the condescension of the tourist industry.

In 2006, the *Guardian* sponsored a poll to identify the most neglected moment in British radical history. The 'winning' episode, as voted by readers, was the Putney Debates. Such raising of awareness of these historic events is, of course, always welcome. However, the broader project of commemorating the development of British democracy threatens to replace genuine history with a politically-motivated fiction.

Parliament for the people

The Putney Debates began on 28 October 1647, as the general council of the parliament's New Model Army met to discuss *An Agreement of the People*. This paper, produced by civilian Levellers, called for regular, two-yearly parliaments and an equal distribution of MPs' seats according to the number of inhabitants in each constituency. It guaranteed freedom of conscience, indemnity for parliamentarian soldiers and equality before the law.

Colonel Thomas Rainborowe, MP for Droitwich, vice-admiral of the English Navy and an implacable opponent of Oliver Cromwell, expressed his belief that all men who signed the *Agreement* should be eligible to vote: "For really I think that the poorest he that is in England hath a life to live, as the greatest… every man that is to live under a government ought first by his own consent put himself under that government". An irate Henry Ireton, Cromwell's son-in-law, responded: "no person has a right to an interest or share in the disposing or determining of the affairs of the kingdom… that has not a permanent fixed interest in this kingdom".

The confrontation between Rainborowe and Ireton is often seen as the defining moment of the Putney Debates. It represented a collision between the radical advocate of the rights of all free-born Englishmen and the defender of the landed interest who "would have an eye to property".

The Putney Debates have been celebrated as seminal in the history of British democracy by a host of 20th-century historians and politicians. Marxist scholars, such as Christopher Hill, saw the Levellers as representing the English petty bourgeoisie. American liberals such as the historian of Puritanism William Haller (1885–1974) praised John Lilburne as an early advocate of "free enterprise".

The celebration of the Levellers' contribution to the development of democracy has spread into the political arena. Since 1975, left-wingers have commemorated the suppression of the Leveller-inspired mutiny at Burford in 1649. The late Socialist icon Tony Benn used his speech at the second 'Levellers Day' in 1976 to applaud them for their forward-looking ideals, which "anticipated by a century and a half the main ideas of the American and French Revolutions".

Paraphrasing Benn, historian and former Labour politician Tristram Hunt later described Rainborowe's comments as expressing the "ethical ideal of socialism" and suggested that the "language and ideas expressed in the US constitution were lifted straight from the Putney Debates". In fact, it is doubtful that the words spoken at Putney influenced the Founding Fathers, because the text of the debates was not published until 1891.

In 1649, the imprisoned John Lilburne had defiantly predicted that "posterity… shall reap the benefit of our endeavours whatever shall become of us". Yet, for more than 200 years, references to the Putney Debates and the Levellers were scarce. Although a permanent record of the debates was kept by the general secretary of the army, all reporting of the debates was banned. They were barely mentioned in contemporary news sheets and pamphlets.

> **"Every person in England has as clear a right to elect his representative as the greatest person in England. I conceive that's the undeniable maxim of government: that all government is in the free consent of the people"**
>
> John Wildman, from the Putney Debates (1647)

This secrecy was unsurprising. The discussion of the franchise, the most celebrated element of the debate for recent historians and commentators, was neither the most significant nor the lengthiest portion of the discussions. The focus instead was on settling the kingdom, in particular the king's role in any future peace negotiations. During the debates, two soldiers referred to Charles I as a "man of blood", a tyrant who had waged war against his people and must be brought to retributive, divinely willed justice.

Religious language suffused the talk at Putney. People attending the debates also gathered for prayer meetings charged with apocalyptic language. New historical research suggests that Putney saw a shift from the pursuit of a negotiated settlement with the king to the decision to bring Charles I to trial. In the chaotic political situation following the first civil war, few of the participants in the debate – Cromwell least of all – wished the proceedings to become public.

Invented tradition

Celebration of the Levellers, including the *Guardian*'s competition, has been driven by a desire to fit them into a tradition of British radicalism as forerunners of democracy, liberalism and socialism. But if the Levellers are part of a democratic tradition, it is a tradition that has largely been invented by 20th- and 21st-century historians, journalists and politicians, not one created by the radical movements themselves.

Though John Lilburne was remembered as a champion of press freedom and the jury system in both Britain and North America, the Levellers' direct influence on later radical movements appears to have been limited. Even once CH Firth's transcriptions of the Putney Debates had been published, they were mainly seen as being of interest to military historians. It was not until the publication in 1938 of ASP Woodhouse's provocatively titled *Puritanism and Liberty* that Putney was established as a milestone in British constitutional history.

Woodhouse's edition of the debates had an explicitly political aim – to provide ideological ammunition for the public in the battle against the forces of fascism and, later, Soviet totalitarianism. It is his re-interpretation of Putney as a crucible of democratic thought that has proved most influential to the present day.

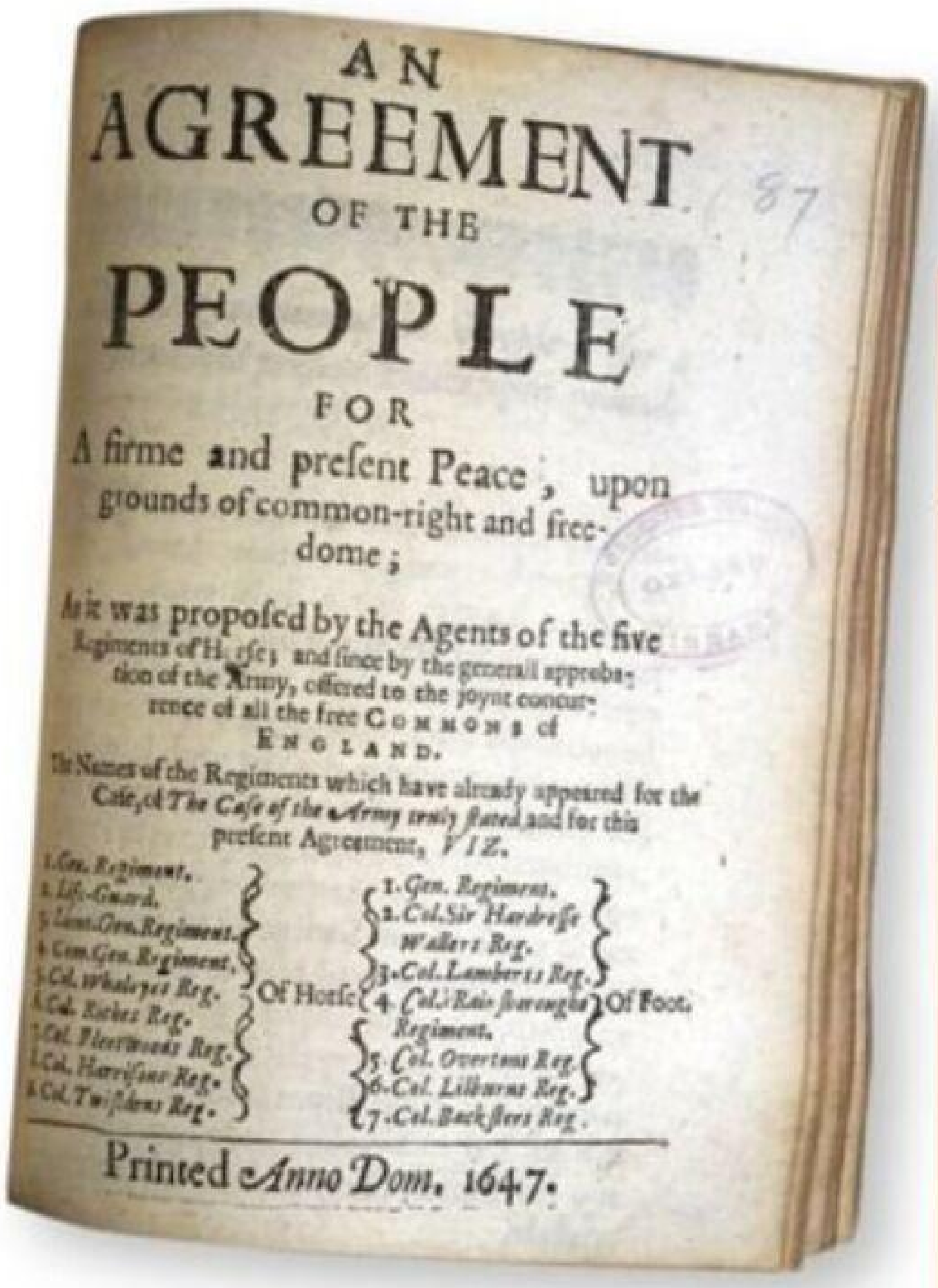
Historians have now begun to ask whether the Levellers have been given disproportionate attention, and whether we can talk of the 'Levellers' at all. Recent scholarship has argued that there was no coherent Leveller programme before autumn 1647. The term Leveller didn't appear until after the Putney Debates, and was a pejorative label attached to these London radicals by their opponents. The radicals' critics claimed they wanted to "level" all social distinctions and do away with private property.

Leading Leveller writers William Walwyn, John Lilburne and Richard Overton were always keen to disassociate themselves from the term. In *A Manifestation* (1649) they complained that they "never had it in our thoughts to level men's estates, it being the utmost of our aim… that every man may with as much security as may be enjoy his propriety". Perhaps, as some historians have suggested, we have been guilty of accepting the words of the Levellers' critics too literally, and have viewed them as a more radical, modern and coherent group than they really were.

In the wake of the *Guardian*'s poll, proposals for events and an exhibition at St Mary's Church Putney to commemorate these debates threatened to set in stone the anachronistic interpretation of the Levellers as the first democrats, liberals or socialists. Such attempts risk institutionalising an invented tradition of British radicalism through museum displays, heritage centres and public memorials. It has been argued that commemorations of this kind provide an antidote to a heritage industry fixated on the lives of our kings and queens. In fact, this version of Putney really offers its 'radical' equivalent – a romantic vision of great historical democrats (Lilburne, Walwyn) struggling against the oppressive and tyrannical 'baddies' (Cromwell, Ireton). It makes good melodrama, but it also happens to be bad history.

EP Thompson would, I suspect, be horrified at the proposed 'heritage-isation' of British radicalism. Thompson believed that the role of radical history was to arm the people for the political struggles that they faced in future. Yet the *Guardian* poll offered only an opportunity to 'celebrate', through a Whiggish narrative of ever-broadening British freedom, the rights we enjoy at present. The history of the Levellers, crushed by the army leadership and largely forgotten for almost 250 years, should warn us against this smug complacency about the security of our civil liberties.

So should we bother to commemorate Putney at all? Yes – but in ways that will allow us to continue to benefit from the most recent historical research on the subject. The Levellers are important. They were the first western Europeans to develop the idea of an essentially secular written constitution (though they did so to preserve their own deeply held religious beliefs). Consequently, they were the first to approach a more modern understanding of freedom of conscience and freedom of speech as natural human rights.



AN
AGREEMENT
OF THE
PEOPLE
FOR
A firme and preſent Peace, upon
grounds of common-right and free-
dome;

As it was propoſed by the Agents of the five
Regiments of Horſe; and ſince by the generall approba-
tion of the Army, offered to the joynt concur-
rence of all the free COMMONS of
ENGLAND.

The Names of the Regiments which have already appeared for the
Caſe, of *The Caſe of the Army truly ſtated*, and for this
preſent Agreement, *VIZ.*

1. Gen. Regiment.
2. Life-Guard.
3. Lieut.Gen.Regiment.
4. Com.Gen.Regiment.
5. Col. Whalyes Reg.
6. Col. Riches Reg.
7. Col. Fleetwoods Reg.
8. Col. Harriſons Reg.
9. Col. Twiſldens Reg.
Of Horſe.

1. Gen. Regiment.
2. Col. Sir Hardreſſe Wallers Reg.
3. Col. Lamberts Reg.
4. Col. Rainſboroughs Regiment.
5. Col. Overtons Reg.
6. Col. Lilburns Reg.
7. Col. Backſters Reg.
Of Foot.

Printed *Anno Dom.* 1647.

87

An Agreement of the People – a radical call for a new constitution that was debated at Putney

ALAMY

A warning from history

Their analysis of the politics of the 1640s remains highly relevant today. They saw that an over-mighty parliament could be as dangerous, if not more so, than a tyrannical king. Accordingly, they called both for greater accountability in government and the establishing of civil liberties that could not be undermined by either the monarch or his ministers, even under the pretence of emergency or necessity.

An Agreement of the People and these remarkable debates remain relevant today and should be used to fuel discussions of the enduring importance of these English writers and politicians. If we read their own words, not the bowdlerisations of their 20th- and 21st-century interpreters, Leveller writing has much to say about present threats to our rights and freedoms. Those who spoke, wrote and gave their lives for liberty deserve more than to have their ideas reduced to ignominious and inaccurate banalities on a blue plaque. H

Ted Vallance is professor of early modern British political culture at the University of Roehampton, and author of *A Radical History of Britain* (Little, Brown, 2009)

WHAT WERE THE PUTNEY DEBATES?

When and where were the debates?

They were held between 28 October and 11 November 1647 at the Church of St Mary the Virgin, Putney, at the time headquarters of the general council of parliamentarian New Model Army.

Why did they happen?

The debates centred on two documents, *The Case of the Armie Truly Stated* and *An Agreement of the People*. The *Agreement* sought a plan of settlement for the kingdom established on popular, not royal, consent.

Who attended the debates?

The army leadership, represented by Oliver Cromwell and Cromwell's son-in-law, Henry Ireton, rank and file agitators including Edward Sexby, and civilian Levellers John Wildman and Maximillian Petty.

What took place at the Putney Debates?

After a fierce exchange of views, Cromwell succeeded in getting discussion of the *Agreement* deferred to a committee of 18. The committee rejected the more radical proposals, and instead agreed on a compromise settlement. The present Long Parliament would be dissolved, and a new parliament elected on a franchise comprising all those men who, with arms or money, had supported the parliamentarian cause up to the battle of Naseby.

What were the consequences?

Mutinous troops at the first army rendezvous after Putney – at Ware, Hertfordshire – demonstrated their opposition to the compromise by wearing copies of *An Agreement of the People* in their hats, which Cromwell tore off them. Three ringleaders were identified and one, Private Richard Arnold, was executed. Though the *Agreement* was not implemented, the Putney Debates led to a hardening of the army's attitude to Charles I.

DISCOVER MORE

BOOKS

- ▶ **Roundhead Reputations** by Blair Worden (Allen Lane, 2001)
- ▶ **Geoffrey Robertson presents The Levellers: The Putney Debates** (Verso, 2007)
- ▶ **John Lilburne and the Levellers** by John Rees, ed (Routledge, 2017)

An engraving of Cromwell in the role of military leader from a 1656 book praising his achievements

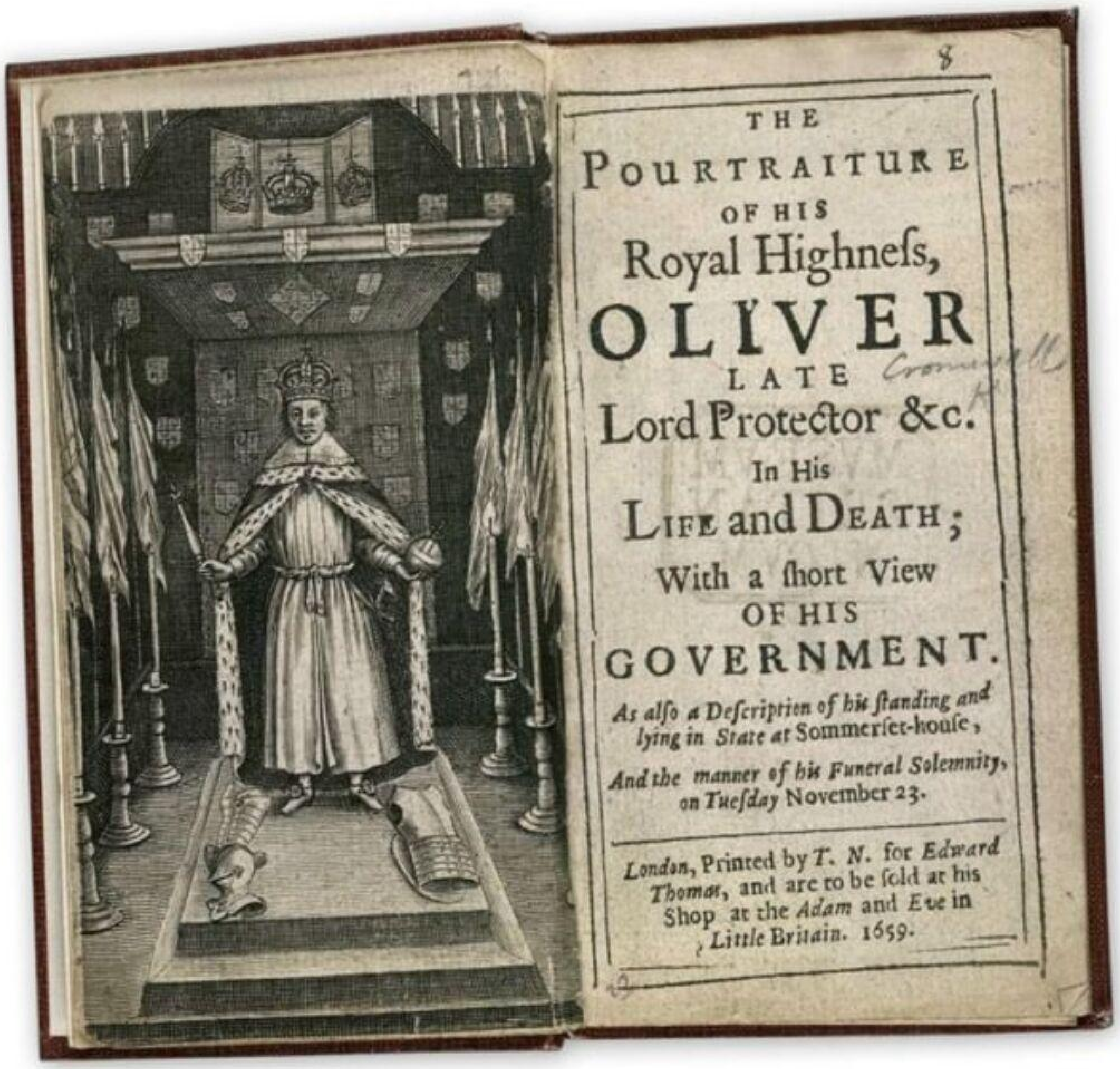
PUTTING THE PROTECTOR BACK INTO THE PROTECTORATE

OLIVAR·D·G·R·P·ANG·SCO·HIB·&·PRO

Oliver Cromwell is shown crowned with laurel on a coin of 1658

Oliver Cromwell has sometimes been seen as little more than a figurehead in the governance of Britain after the execution of Charles I. But as **Patrick Little** explains, the results of cutting-edge research challenges that viewpoint

GETTY/BRIDGEMAN



8

THE
POURTRAITURE
OF HIS
Royal Highneſs,
OLIVER
LATE *Cromwell*
Lord Protector &c.
In His
LIFE and DEATH;
With a ſhort View
OF HIS
GOVERNMENT.
As alſo a Deſcription of his ſtanding and lying in State at Sommerſet-houſe,
And the manner of his Funeral Solemnity, on Tueſday November 23.

London, Printed by *T. N.* for *Edward Thomas*, and are to be ſold at his Shop at the *Adam* and *Eve* in *Little Britain.* 1659.

Although he had rejected the crown, the nature of Cromwell's power was invested with obvious royal symbolism, as this 1659 account of his life and death makes clear

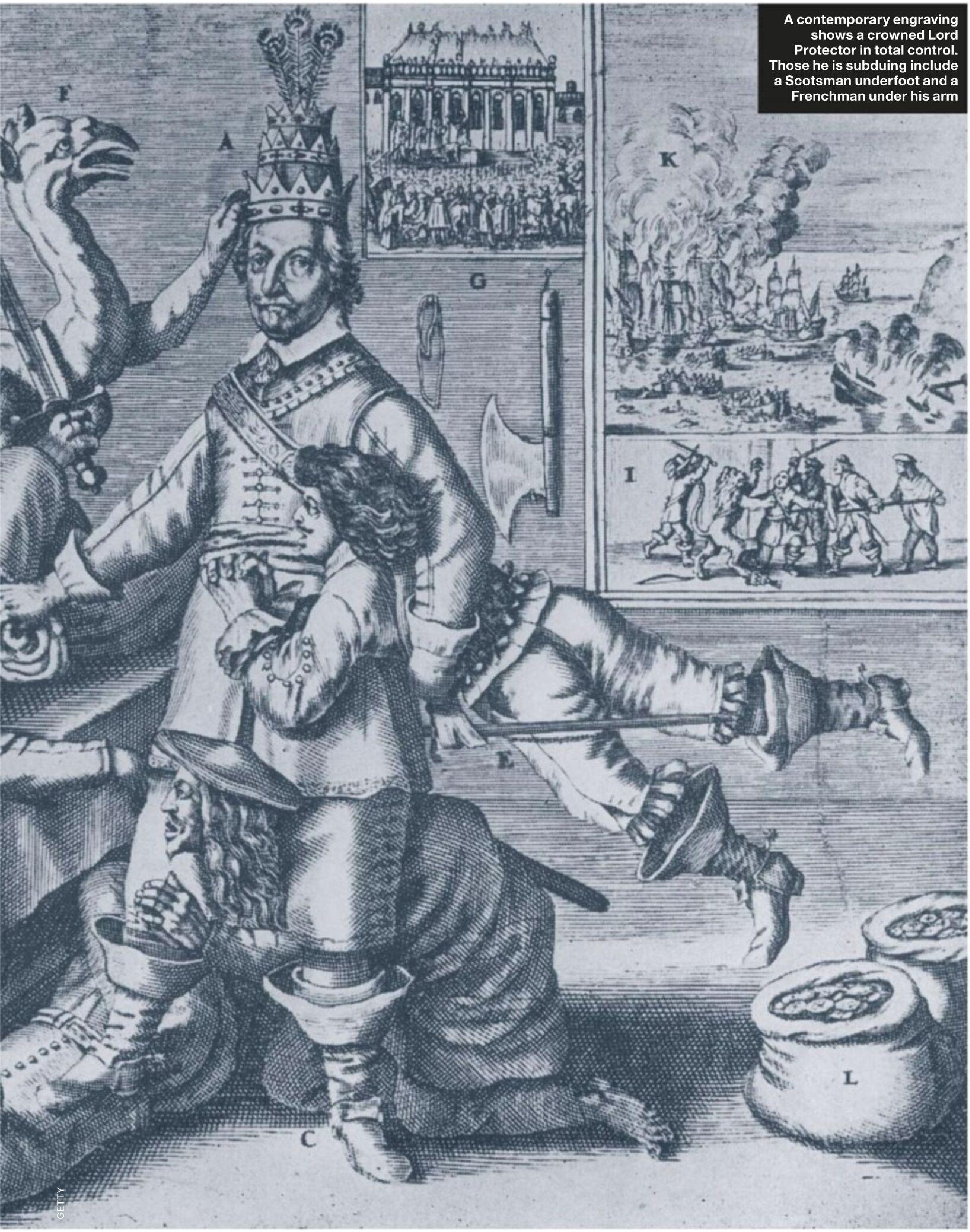
Oliver Cromwell was never a king, but on 16 December 1653 he took the trappings of royalty in a solemn ceremony at Westminster Hall. Amid a throng of statesmen, soldiers and civic dignitaries, Cromwell swore an oath "to govern these nations according to the laws, statutes and customs, seeking their peace and causing justice and law to be equally administered", and then took his seat on the "chair of state" to become Lord Protector of the Commonwealth of England, Scotland and Ireland.

Although this was a new ceremony, devised especially for the first commoner to rule the country, and coinciding with the unveiling of Britain's first written constitution, the trappings of royalty were very much in evidence. And as the Protectorate continued, it was clear that there was indeed something sovereign in the exercise of Cromwell's power. The title Protector was redolent of the guardians of Henry VI and Edward VI in the 15th and 16th centuries; Cromwell signed official documents as Oliver P, with Protector taking the place (and having many of the connotations) of Rex; in conversation and correspondence he became addressed as "your highness".

There are many reasons for seeing Lord Protector Oliver as a king in all but name

A brand new constitution

The Instrument of Government – effectively the new (and Britain's first) constitution – instituted a balanced government by Protector and council, with law-making by a single-chambered parliament. But the wording of the constitution apparently gave Cromwell supreme power. The titles it used for him were not only Lord Protector but also "the single person" – a name denoting singularity, almost implying supremacy over the state. There are many reasons for seeing Lord Protector Oliver as a king in all but name.



A contemporary engraving shows a crowned Lord Protector in total control. Those he is subduing include a Scotsman underfoot and a Frenchman under his arm

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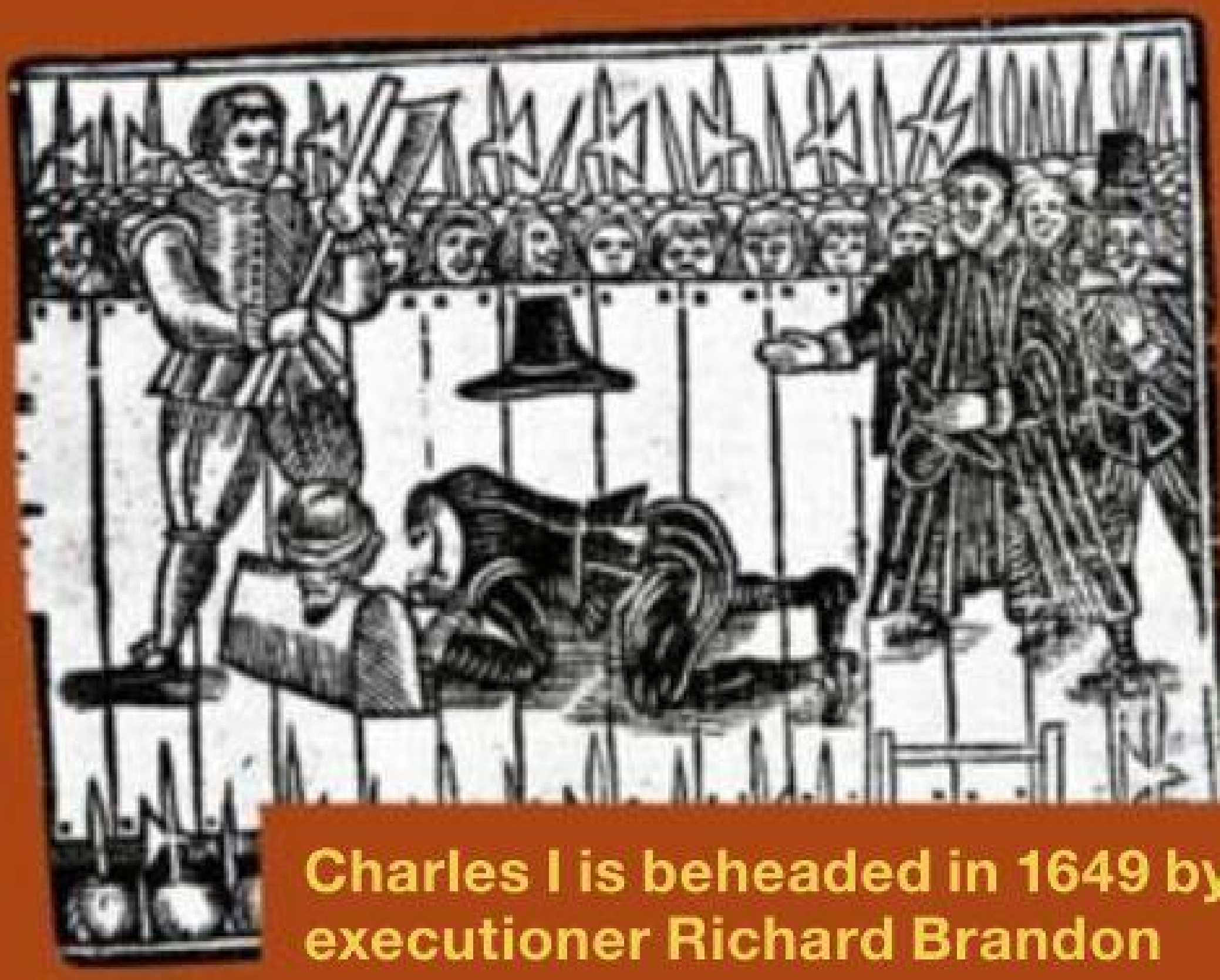
TIMELINE

The Protectorate: 10 key moments



Charles I is beheaded in 1649 by executioner Richard Brandon

30 January 1649

King Charles I is executed and the English republic known as the 'commonwealth' is created. It has a council of state and a 'Rump Parliament' consisting of a much-reduced House of Commons

20 April 1653

Cromwell brings soldiers into the Commons and forces the Rump Parliament to close, bringing the commonwealth to an end

16 December 1653

The Protectorate is inaugurated and Oliver Cromwell is sworn in as Lord Protector under the Instrument of Government, a new constitution drawn up by senior army officers

March 1655

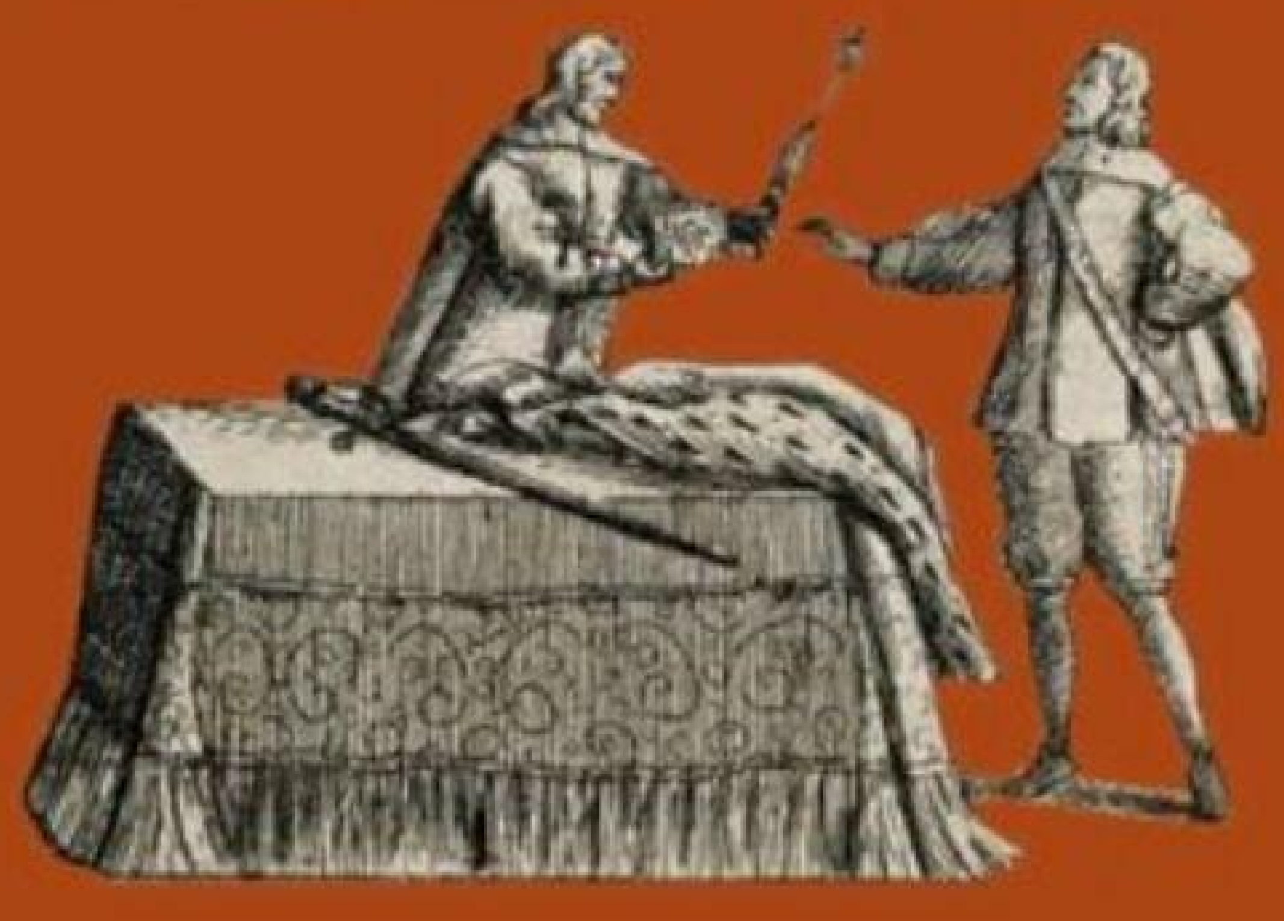
Penruddock's royalist rising takes place in south-west England. Its failure demonstrates the weakness of the royalist cause, and provides the excuse for the imposition of military rule in England and Wales

Aug 1655–Jan 1657

The localities are ruled by Major-Generals who implement a programme of harsh measures against former royalists and a drive for religious and moral reform. Their activities provoke a call for a greater civilian influence over the Protectorate

February–May 1657

The kingship debates take place in parliament, starting with the formal offer of the crown to Cromwell on 23 February. After a long period of deliberation and prayer, on 8 May he rejects the crown but accepts the revised civilian constitution, the Humble Petition and Advice



Cromwell's second inauguration in 1657 included many of the trappings of a coronation

26 June 1657

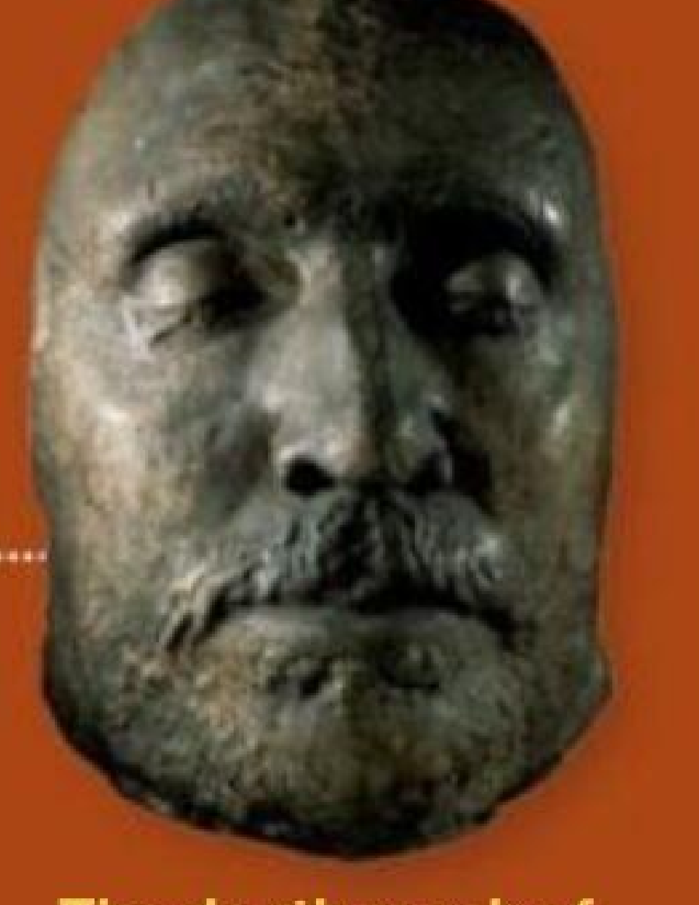
The second inauguration of Cromwell as Protector takes place under the Humble Petition and Advice, in a ceremony that seems to many observers to be tantamount to a coronation

4 June 1658

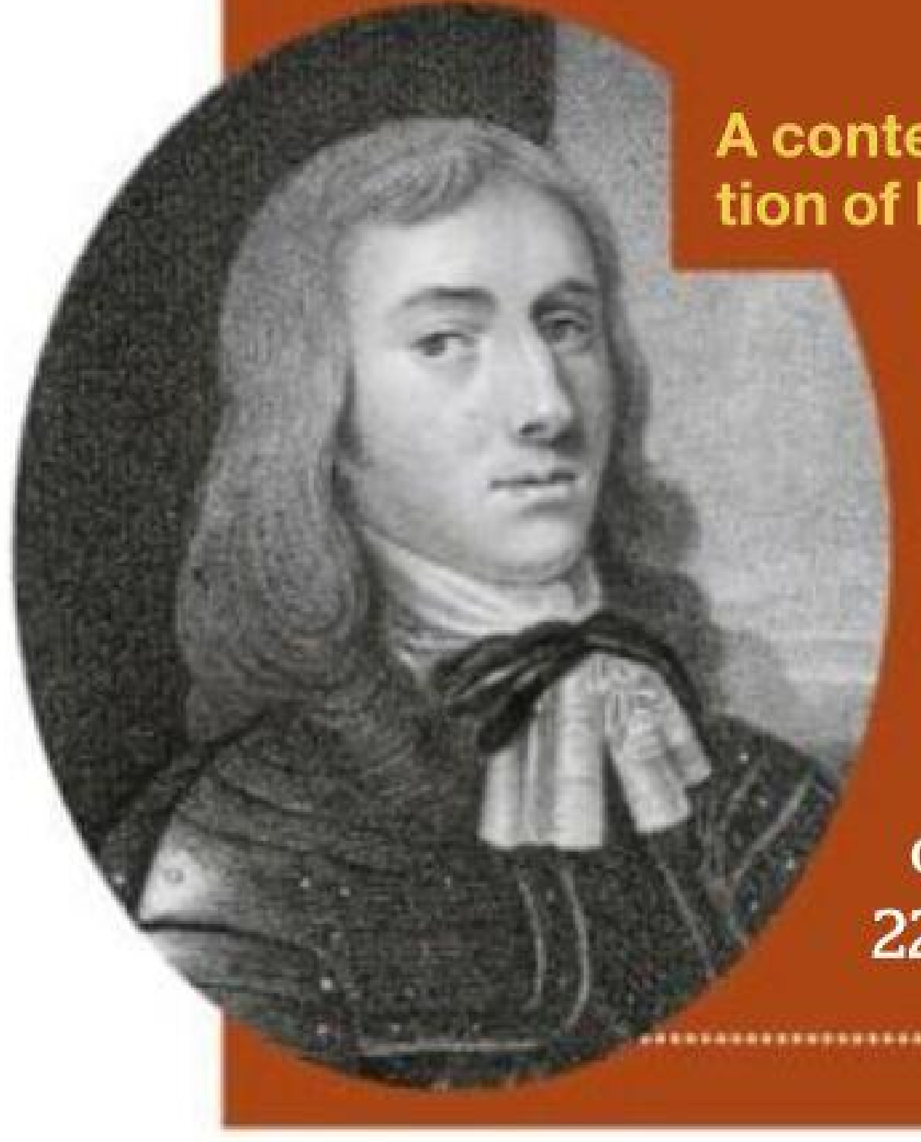
The town of Dunkirk is captured, becoming a permanent base on the continent (until sold to France by Charles II in 1662) – a symbol of the success of Cromwell's foreign policy and the strength of English military power

3 September 1658

Oliver Cromwell dies and his son Richard succeeds him as Protector



The death mask of Oliver Cromwell



A contemporary illustration of Richard Cromwell

May 1659

Richard Cromwell's Protectorate collapses following a coup by army officers that had forced the dissolution of parliament on 22 April

GETTY/BRIDGEMAN

The regal nature of Cromwell's Protectorate sounded a dissonant note for some. For those people, the elevation of Cromwell was not what they had wanted or expected after the conflicts of the 1640s, the execution of Charles I in 1649, and the disappointments of the republican regimes.

Such concerns were also in the minds of Cromwell and his advisers in December 1653. Despite the outwardly regal style of Cromwell's Protectorate, the Instrument of Government placed very definite limits on his powers. The terms of the new constitution were binding on the Protector, and parliament was given a key role in law-making; as the Instrument emphasised, "the supreme legislative authority… shall be and reside in one person [ie the Protector] and the people assembled in Parliament".

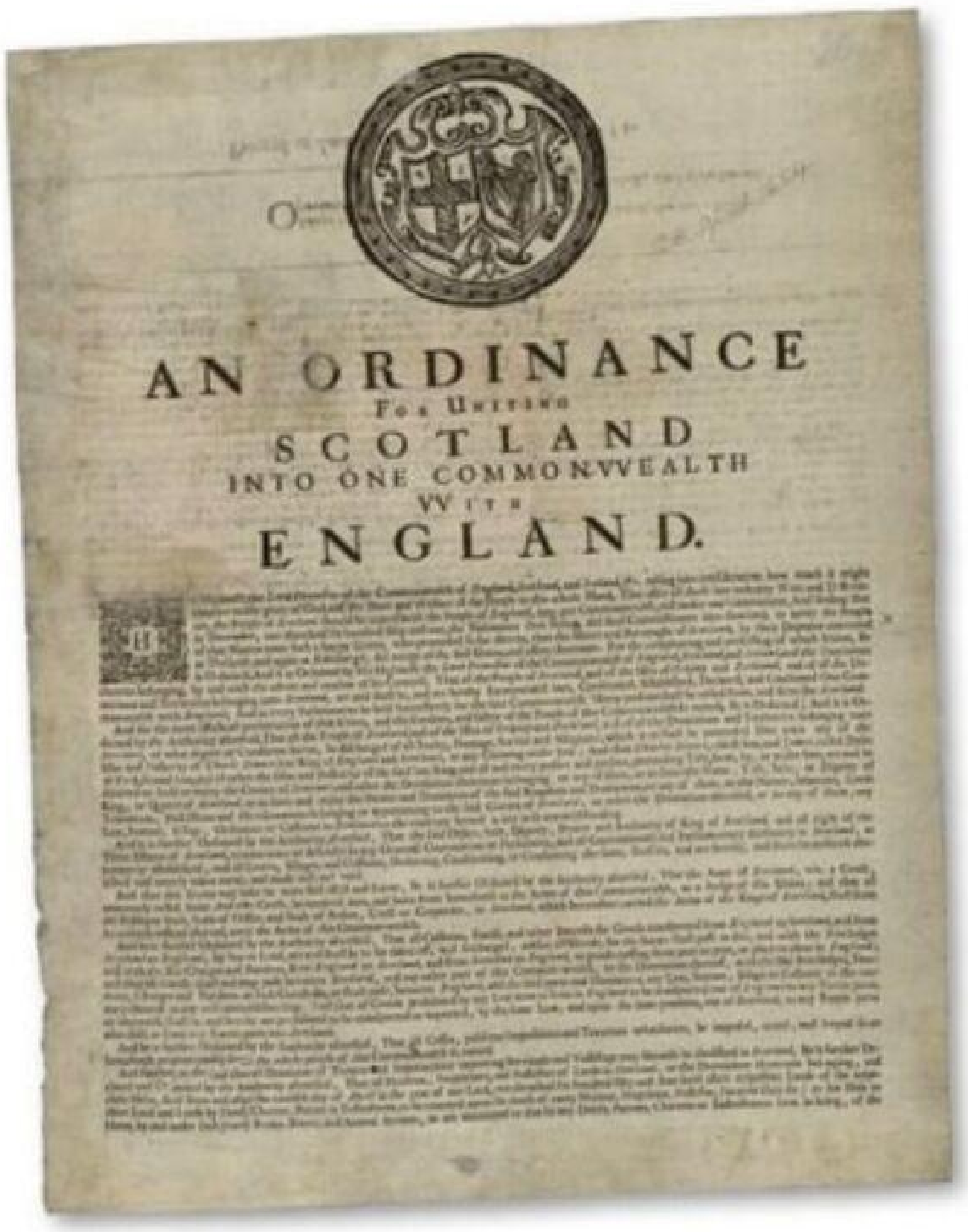
Perhaps most importantly, the exercise of government was not left to Cromwell alone, but was declared to be "in the Lord Protector, assisted with a council". This council had to consent to foreign treaties, the making of war and peace, and the methods used to raise money. It also had the right to remove (or "exclude") members of parliament deemed immoral or politically dangerous, and had the sole authority to elect a new Protector on Cromwell's death. The end product, it was hoped, would be a true balance of power.

These theoretical restraints on Cromwell's freedom of action have tended to be accepted by historians as having been effective in practice. They have emphasised the strength of the council's position as a counterbalance, even a restraint, on Cromwell's actions – thereby diminishing Cromwell's own importance as a ruler. No longer the saint or demon of contemporary caricature, the Protector has taken on a vapid demeanour – more concerned with the bigger picture, with such matters as liberty of conscience for religious radicals and the "healing and settling" of the nations.

Liberty of conscience

There is no doubt that these were important concerns for him. He insisted that "liberty of conscience is a natural right", fundamental in any state, while he announced he was "hugely taken with the word Settlement, with the thing and with the notion of it". Members of the council, the courtiers, the army officers and religious divines, strove to influence policy, vying to become the powers behind the Protectoral throne.

SCRAN-NAT. ARCHIVES SCOTLAND



AN ORDINANCE
FOR UNITING
SCOTLAND
INTO ONE COMMONVVEALTH
VVITH
ENGLAND.

The 1654 Ordinance uniting England and Scotland under Cromwell's Protectorate

He insisted that he was but an honest man who had been thrust into power against his will

This picture is further coloured by historians' willingness to accept Cromwell's own word for it. Time and again he insisted that he was but an honest man, a "good constable to keep the peace of the parish", who had been thrust into power against his will. When it came to the practicalities of ruling, he insisted that the Instrument of Government had "limited me and bound my hands" to do nothing without the council's consent; he could do nothing "but in ordination with the council"; "he was but one" against many. In short, political decisions were not his – they were forced on him by others. Accepting this at face value leaves a curious hole in the centre of the government – a Protectorate without the Protector – and reduces the last years of Cromwell's extraordinary career to an anticlimax.

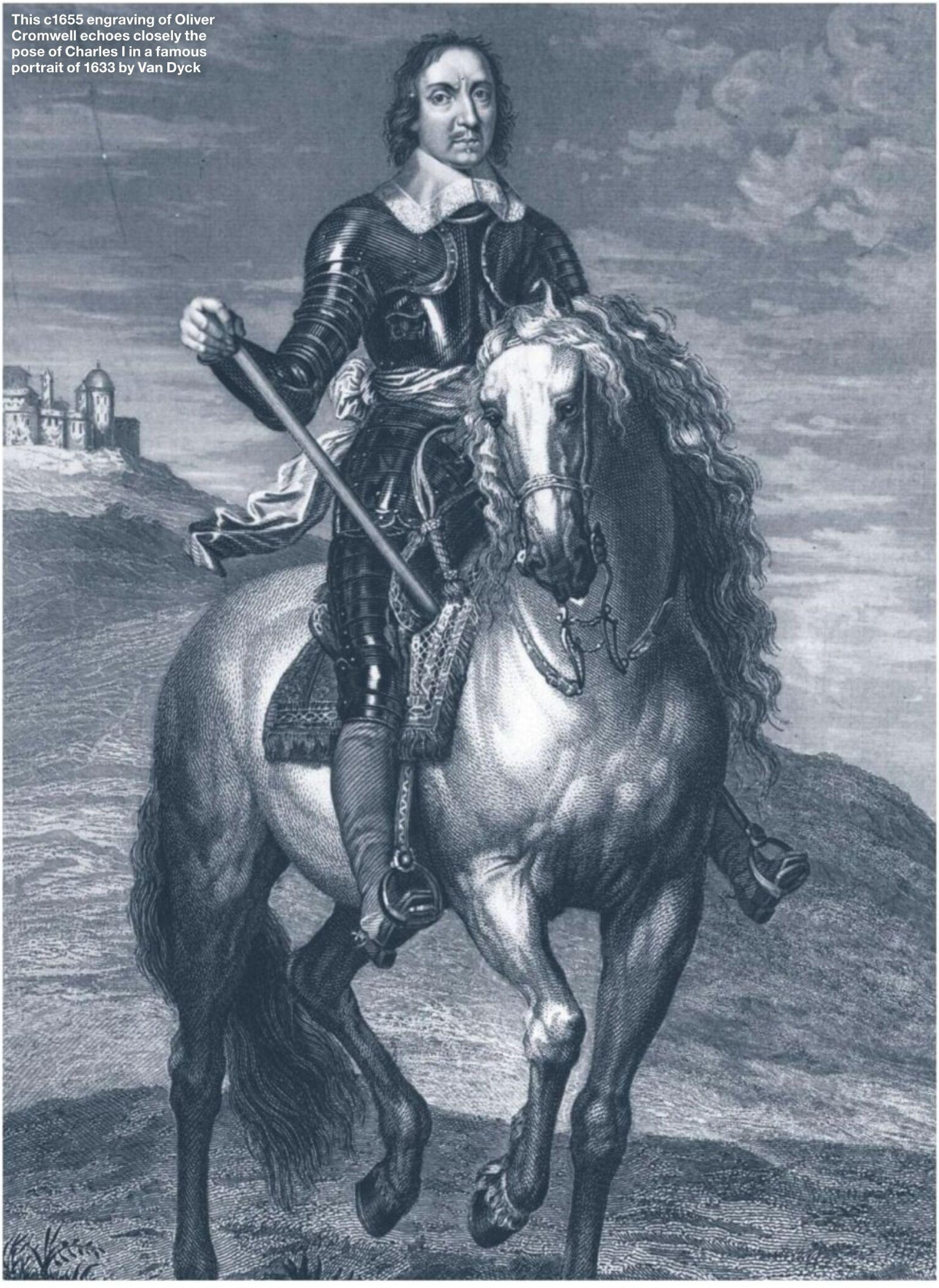
As editor of a collection of essays by leading scholars of the period (*The Cromwellian Protectorate*), I was struck by how far the results of research might change our view of the Protectorate. Especially important were the findings of Professor Blair Worden who argued that, beneath the formal governmental structures, the Protector wielded enormous power. The theoretical strength of the council was not seen in practice. Cromwell was the main influence over the choice of councillors, and the vast majority were members of his 'affinity' or of the 'Cromwellian party' from earlier parliaments. The councillors as a group were impressive only because of their connection with him or their position in the army. Cromwell's protests that he was bound by the council did not reflect a political reality; they were intended "to appease opponents of his usurped power" – those who objected to military rule, or were suspicious of his ambitions.

These "displacements of responsibility" were entirely calculating. Contemporary sources are full of hints to this effect. Foreign diplomats and their rulers were not fooled, recognising that Cromwell "had a perfect knowledge of all things". The records of the council suggest that Cromwell controlled its meetings, that he chose members of important committees and commissions, and that his wishes were rarely challenged. Time and again, measures were adopted at his special command, and others were passed only when his "pleasure" had been sought. When it suited him, he readily sought advice outside the council, calling on a small number of friends and courtiers. As Professor Worden commented: "When we catch glimpses of the Protector at the council or among his councillors he seems to have done most of the talking, and always to have got his way."

The most wily of politicians

This elevation of Oliver Cromwell above his councillors and advisers raises further intriguing possibilities. Was he behind the creation of the Protectorate in 1653, rather than the army officers traditionally seen as the architects of the Instrument of Government? Was it he (rather than courtiers close to him) who in 1657 sponsored the Humble Address and Remonstrance, the new, civilian, constitution that offered him the crown? Did the increasingly regal style of the Protectoral court reflect his own tastes and ambitions? Was the succession as Protector of his son, Richard, in 1658 really a last-minute, deathbed decision?

Also worth examining are those earlier incidents during which Cromwell was conspicuous by his absence but from which outcomes he gained greatly, such as the



This c1655 engraving of Oliver Cromwell echoes closely the pose of Charles I in a famous portrait of 1633 by Van Dyck

GETTY

Instead of an exercise in collective government, Oliver Cromwell's regime begins to resemble a personal monarchy

capture of Charles I by the parliamentarian army officer George Joyce in the summer of 1647, and Colonel Thomas Pride's Purge of the House of Commons of its conservative or Presbyterian members in December 1648. As Worden put it: "the evasion of liability… was one of Cromwell's arts of power". Perhaps it is time to consider Cromwell as the most wily of politicians, as well as the most godly of magistrates.

The return of Cromwell to the epicentre of power also has implications for our understanding of the Protectorate. Instead of an exercise in collective government, the regime begins to resemble a personal monarchy, and its successes should be celebrated as Cromwell's own. These successes were many and varied – in foreign policy, in the settlement of the three nations, in the development of a highly sophisticated court culture (see the box, right, on this page).

Serious miscalculations

And if the achievements of the Protectorate must now be attributed to Cromwell personally, so must the failures in parliament, religious reform and everyday government. Above all, he must be held responsible for two serious miscalculations that were to leave a poisoned chalice for his son, Richard, when he succeeded as Protector. The new civilian constitution, the Humble Petition and Advice, grew from the Remonstrance, and like that earlier work proposed a return to an "ancient constitution" based on a king, a weakened council, and a parliament of two chambers.

The Humble Petition was accepted by Oliver in June 1657, with important changes, including the removal of the "kingly title", but it remained incomplete and ambiguous. This was partly because it had been designed as a monarchical constitution, and his refusal of the crown had necessitated considerable revision and further legislation that never took place. As a result, Richard spent much of his parliament in the spring of 1659 fending off attacks on his weak constitutional position.

The single biggest threat facing the Protectorate – the continued importance of the army in the political process – was also something that Oliver refused to tackle. Indeed, his desire to keep the senior officers on board led him, apparently deliberately, to hold back progress towards a civilian settlement in the last years of his life. This was to have a devastating impact on Richard, because it meant that he did not have the personal authority necessary to remove or overrule his father's military advisers. As a result, in May 1659 a coup led by the senior officers of the army brought the Protectorate to an ignominious end. **H**

Cromwell's **successes and failures** as Lord Protector

Successes

❶ Political stability

This was a priority for most people after the Civil War and republic, and a personal ambition of Cromwell. The failure of his enemies to mount a serious challenge to the Protectorate, and the decision of many conservative critics and former royalists to cooperate with the regime by the later 1650s, shows that he was surprisingly successful in securing "settlement". ✓

❷ The Cromwellian Union

Although the Union of England with Ireland and Scotland was based on conquest and destruction in the early 1650s, during the Protectorate a more constructive relationship developed, and many Protestants in each country grew to support the Protectorate. ✓

❸ Foreign policy

Although the "Western Design" to capture Hispaniola in the Spanish West Indies was a disaster, the rest of Cromwell's foreign schemes were successes, including the establishment of the colony of Jamaica, the defeat of Spanish fleets at sea, the founding of a French alliance, and the subsequent victories against Spain at Mardyke and Dunkirk in Flanders. ✓

❹ Growth of court culture

This can be seen in Cromwell's plans to beautify the former royal palaces, and also in the flowering of secular music at court and the encouragement of such literary greats as John Milton and Andrew Marvell. ✓

Failures

❶ The army

At the beginning of the Protectorate, Cromwell's power was based on the army, and his primary loyalty was to the soldiers and their "good old cause". He never managed to free himself from their influence, even when the regime became more and more civilian in nature. ✗

❷ Parliaments

Oliver's two parliaments (1654–5 and 1656–8) failed to deliver the mixture of radical godly reform and conservative political settlement that he so much desired, mainly because the two aims were incompatible. ✗

❸ Religious reform in the localities

Such schemes as the Major-Generals and the "triers and ejectors" (commissioners to decide which church ministers needed to be removed) were meant to ensure that only godly men served in parishes, and that a "reformation of manners" took place among the ordinary people. Neither was popular, and both were successfully resisted. ✗

❹ The smooth succession of his son, Richard

Although there was no immediate trouble in September 1658, Richard faced the problem of a rebellious army and an unworkable constitution, the Protectoral Humble Petition and Advice. Both were problems that his father had failed to solve. ✗

Dr Patrick Little is a senior research fellow at the History of Parliament Trust in London, a specialist in Irish and Scottish history during the mid-17th century, and author of *The English Civil Wars: A Beginner's Guide* (Oneworld, 2014)

DISCOVER MORE

BOOKS

- ▶ **Oliver Cromwell: New Perspectives** by Patrick Little (Palgrave Macmillan, 2008)
- ▶ **The Cromwellian Protectorate** by Patrick Little, ed (Boydell and Brewer, 2007)
- ▶ **The Cromwellian Protectorate** by Barry Coward (Manchester UP, 2002)
- ▶ **Oliver Cromwell** by JC Davis (Arnold, 2001)

BOOK / KILLERS OF THE KING

INTERVIEW

Charles Spencer at Althorp. "I've always had an almost childish fascination with fairness, and I kept coming across stories that made me so upset," he says

Photography by John Robertson

CHARLES SPENCER

"It would have been better to have let the king try to run and shot him in the back"

*Charles Spencer talks to **Matt Elton** about his book on the men who tried and executed Charles I, and the vengeance wrought by the king's son on his return to England after the Civil War*

JOHN ROBERTSON

PROFILE **CHARLES SPENCER**

Born in London, Spencer attended Eton and studied history at Magdalen College, University of Oxford. He worked for NBC News in the US for nine years, and has presented a number of history documentaries for TV channels in the UK. His previous books include *Blenheim: Battle for Europe* (Orion, 2004) and *Prince Rupert: The Last Cavalier* (Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 2007).

LISTEN TO MORE FROM THIS INTERVIEW
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What were the circumstances that led to Charles II returning from Europe?

The lack of a strong leader following the death of Oliver Cromwell led the British almost to revert to default, thinking: 'Well, we'll have the monarchy back.' So, almost out of nowhere, in 1660 Charles II came back to England from Europe. He had given up hope, and nobody was paying him any attention apart from a few diehard royalists. But he was told that he would be allowed to return, so long as he conceded on various points – including not seeking vengeance against those who had fought on parliament's side in the Civil War.

He agreed, and returned to a tumultuous welcome. This was clearly a problem for 50 per cent of the country, who had to pretend that they had never really *meant* to be parliamentarian. As a result, scapegoats had to be found: the regicides – the men involved in the trial and execution of Charles II's father, Charles I.

What impression did you get of Charles I and Charles II?

My natural leanings would have put me on the parliamentarian side, so I considered the kings with critical eyes. I found Charles I to have been a very decent human being – intelligent, devout, but *so* weak. He always took the last word of advice, which is not good in a crisis such as a civil war. But, as is well known, he died bravely. So you have to admire him at the end, however much of a mess he made of the last 10 years of his rule.

IN CONTEXT Following his defeat in the Civil War (1642–51), Charles I was put to death for 'high treason' in January 1649. About 80 men were considered regicides, including 59 who signed his death warrant, the executioner and his assistant, and nearly 20 others involved in the prosecution and beheading. About 20 of these had died between the execution and the restoration to the throne of Charles II in 1660. Of the remaining men, 13 were hanged, drawn and quartered, two were assassinated, and many were imprisoned for life. Others died of illness and old age before they could be executed. Three fled to America, where two went on the run and one lived openly after it was thought he was dead.

> *"There was such a confluence of interesting people in this story – and they all tended to be on parliament's side"*

I'd always assumed that Charles II, meanwhile, was just a pleasure-loving man, albeit a fairly intelligent one. But he showed quite a focus when it came to revenge: he was still calling for the deaths of those responsible for his father's demise right to the end of his life.

I was worried that we wouldn't be able to do justice to Charles II in the book's illustrations, but we found a great portrait of him sitting in splendour on his throne, looking out at you with a rare steeliness. You think: 'Yes, that's the man.' He had power he never thought he'd have, and he was going to use it. People who had upset him were going to suffer.

Was there a genuine popular desire to see vengeance enacted?

Some people were obvious targets. Thomas Harrison, for instance, had been a prominent figure under Oliver Cromwell and was known to have been unpleasant to Charles I in the final months of the king's life. Many people saw him as a religious fanatic. He was a hated man who wouldn't apologise for anything, and there was real excitement when he was taken to his execution.

So at the start there *was* a thirst for revenge. But it quickly dissipated as people got to know Charles II better. When he sold Dunkirk to the French, he was seen to have betrayed public interest to fund his own extravagance. And as his stock fell, the thirst for the most vicious revenge fell away.

Of the figures involved in Charles I's trial, who particularly stands out?

Henry Marten was a very interesting character. He was a scandalous womaniser and a genuine republican. Some people thought that they had to do something drastic to end a civil war that had cost some 200,000 lives, but others – including Marten – were philosophically determined to kill the king.

He was a very intelligent lawyer, and put together the various constructs of the trial. For instance, he thought of the name of the body that would face the king: 'the Good People of England'. That's a very clever construct, because to take a king to trial you had to set up something fairly worthy.

Obviously, Oliver Cromwell's hand was everywhere in the run-up to Charles I's trial. You can understand why people saw him as the mastermind: he was very keen to have the key people in place. But there was also Cromwell's son-in-law, Henry Ireton, who I think of as a Peter Mandelson figure: he had a lot of influence but didn't want it to be shown.

What really intrigues me about this period, and this story in particular, is that there are so many gigantic figures. I don't know of other parts of English history during which there was such a confluence of interesting people – and they tended to be on parliament's side. They all came together in this unbelievably bold move to put a king on trial for his life.

Their religious conviction was what made it okay for them to do this. You could contemplate killing a king if you believed that God expected you to. The regicides kept referring to a chapter in the Book of Numbers that essentially said: if you want to purify a country that's had terrible bloodshed, you have to spill the blood of he who caused it. You can probably find a Bible verse to suit any occasion, but this is a very handy one if you're thinking of killing a king.

How did the men react when they realised they were being hunted?

Some were disbelieving. Others thought that no more than a handful of people would be held to account. You have to remember that the Restoration happened so quickly that things unravelled for the regicides very fast.

John Hutchinson, for instance, was a Nottinghamshire landowner who was very involved in the trial but pretended at the time of the Restoration that he wasn't. He grabbed his chance and went to the House of Commons, and said that he had nothing to do with it. But he was undone by the fact that the parliamentarians had kept records of everything – down to who had been in

“I would have been a parliamentarian, so I considered the kings with critical eyes”

JOHN ROBERTSON

charge of the committee choosing the cushions at Charles I’s trial. He was arrested and died in prison.

About 28 others stood trial soon after Charles II’s restoration, thinking that they would be forgiven because they’d handed themselves in on time. Others knew that things were going to be very unpleasant. They were kept in incredibly poor conditions: manacled the whole time, and not allowed legal advice or even pens and paper. Others ran for it, to Europe and America, which turned out to be the right thing to do.

The accounts of the trials and executions are extraordinary…

Yes – it was clear what result was expected. The men arrived in a state of shock, because they didn’t know that the charge was going to be high treason. Because they’d had no legal advice, they quite logically said that they had carried out their actions on the authority of the highest power in the land at the time: parliament. Well, to hide behind that wasn’t considered a defence, and in fact was seen as aggravating the offence.

So it was quick. You had to plead guilty or not guilty, and weren’t allowed to offer any justification. If you said guilty, that was the end of it; there was a chance that parliament might reprieve you, but it was unlikely.

If you said not guilty – well, then you had to prove it later on. That was very hard, because the documents were there, with signatures on. You were guilty of high treason if you just *thought* about the king’s demise, so the fact that you’d actually signed his death warrant took it several stages beyond that.

The accused were also undone by the well-meaning wife of one of the regicides, who had kept the execution warrant as proof that her husband was only obeying orders. Well, that has never worked as a defence through the centuries, and it handed the royalists this unbelievable document with the men’s signatures and seals all over it.

The executions were terrible. A lot of these people were very serious fighting men, as hard as nails. Harrison, for instance, showed tremendous courage. After he had been hanged, resuscitated and castrated, and while he was being gutted, he managed to swing a punch at his executioner. The crowd thought that was magnificent, which it was. It was incredibly brave – and also very clever: it led to a quick death afterwards because the executioner was so humiliated.

Did the accused stand a chance of avoiding death?

They stood a chance of not being killed, yes, and of not having their property confiscated. That was one of the surprises in my research: how incredibly important the property side was. Now, of course I get it – no one wants their property confiscated – but this was an *entire* family’s wealth. Because men owned the wealth of a family, if a man had his property confiscated there was nothing left.

By showing genuine sorrow and seeking a pardon you might spare your life, and you might just spare your property, but you were still going to prison for life. It was such a heinous crime, there was no way around that.

Were there any accounts that made a particular impression?

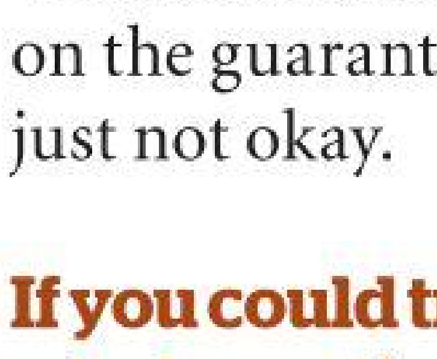
Two of the men who should never have been executed were the colonels who were on the scaffold when Charles was killed. There’s a very touching scene in which the two of them are on a wagon, and they hug each other just before they’re killed. You can imagine being up there with your friend, thinking: this is really unfair.

I kept coming across such stories, which made me so upset. Some of these men were beheaded after they had surrendered on the guarantee of their life, and that’s just not okay.

If you could travel back to this period, what question would you ask?

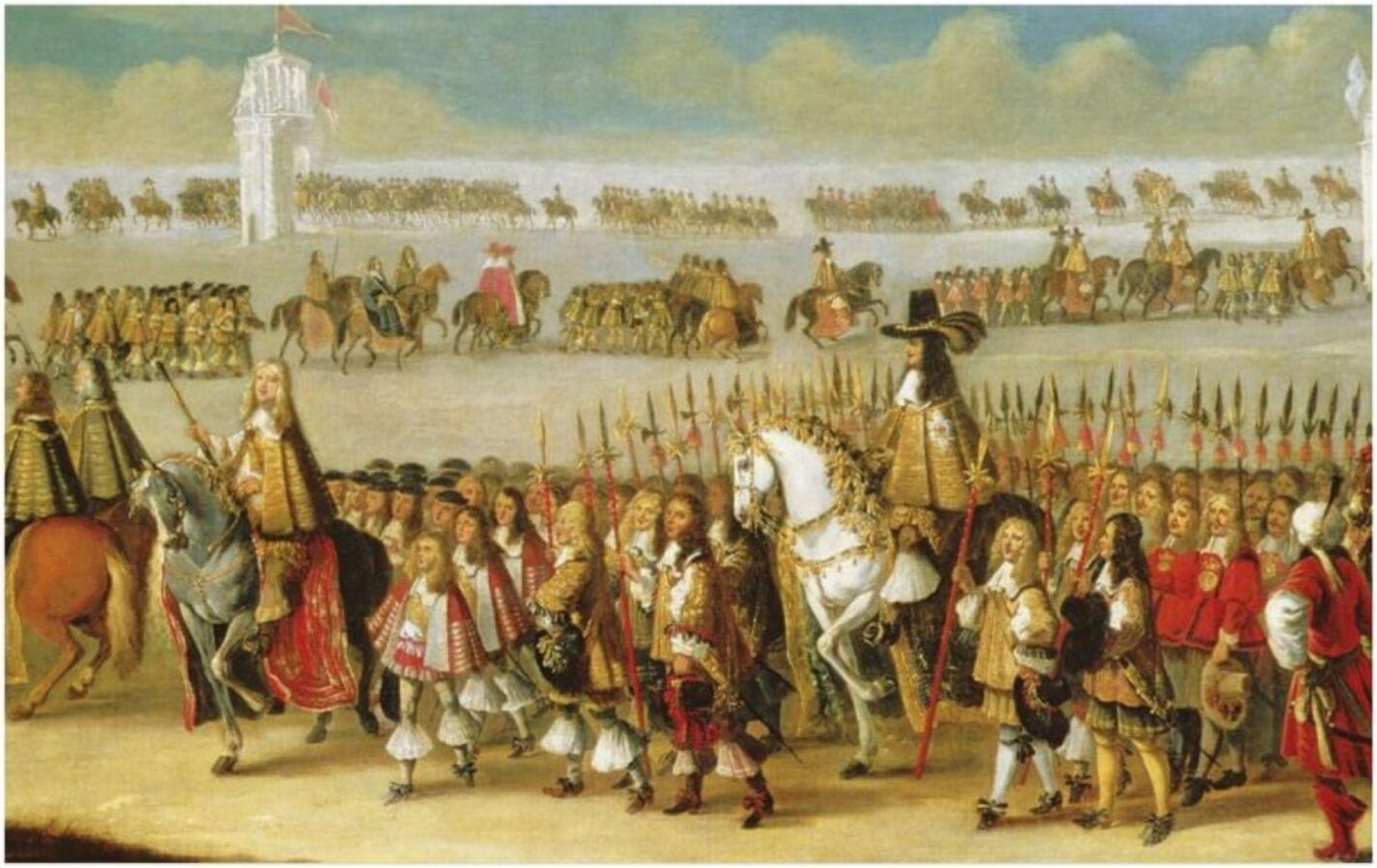
It wouldn’t be very popular, because they were so religiously convinced, but I’d say to the regicides: you justified all of this with one verse in the Bible. Couldn’t you have found another verse that says it’s really *not* okay to do this?

If I were them – if I believed that the king had to die – I personally think that they should have murdered him. They would have been better off letting him try to escape and shooting him in the back, as some parliamentarians planned. It wouldn’t have been noble, and I’m not saying murder is ever a great thing, but in that era there was no chance of putting a king on trial successfully – especially a king to whom you have sworn allegiance as an army officer or MP. They chose the one method that didn’t work: it was completely wrong for the job.



Killers of the King: The Men who Dared to Execute Charles I by Charles Spencer (Bloomsbury, 2014)

THE **HISTORY** ESSAY



Charles II's coronation procession makes its way to Westminster Abbey on 22 April 1661. After the shackles of puritanism were cast off with the Restoration, the people of England could gamble on horses, make music, play cricket and celebrate Christmas with gusto

1660: THE YEAR THAT CHANGED EVERYTHING

In terms of its impact on the ordinary people of England, Charles II's restoration is eclipsed only by the events of 1066

By Ian Mortimer

BRIDGEMAN

THE **HISTORY** ESSAY

Dynasties and dates – are they really that important? So often the death of one king and the accession of his successor, though unsettling at the time, had little impact on the daily lives of the ordinary people. It is difficult to point to any great social changes that were caused by the death of the monarch between 1066 and 1553, for example. Yet there were a few occasions when changes in monarch really *did* matter. The demise of the last Saxon king at Hastings in 1066 was quickly followed by the introduction of Norman governance and the redistribution of large swathes of England to foreign lords. The deaths of Edward VI (1553) and Mary I (1558) significantly affected the religious – and thus the social – condition of the realm. Charles I's execution in 1649 allowed Oliver Cromwell to reform the government and continue the puritan agenda that parliament had started to introduce in the early 1640s.

However, another dynastic date, 1660, stands out as perhaps second only to 1066 in its impact on the people of England. The year of Charles II's restoration saw sudden, profound and permanent changes at every level of society, from the ruling classes down to the level of the most humble servant.

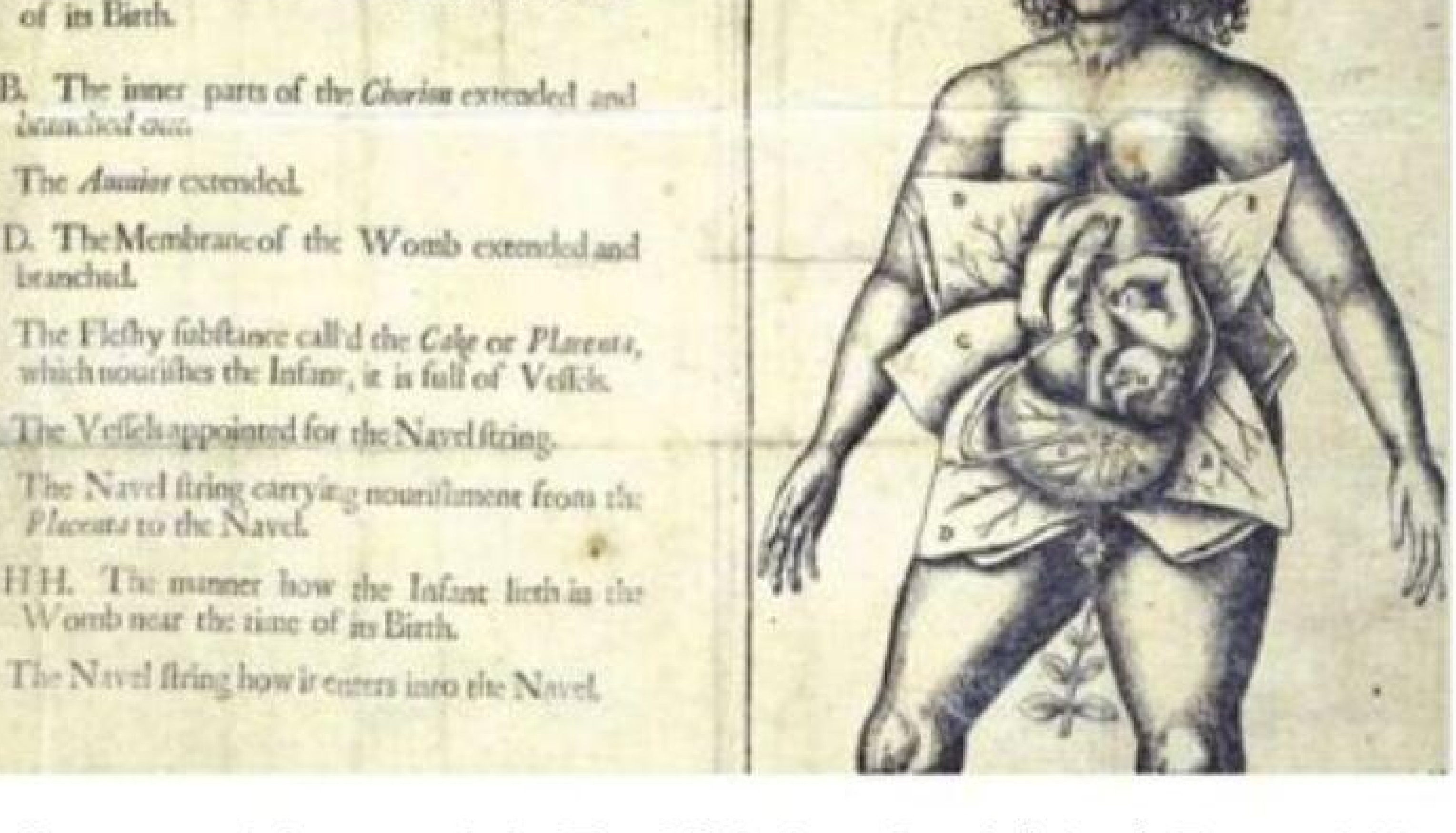
To appreciate the changes that the country experienced in 1660 you first have to reflect that in 1659 there was no such thing as a king of England. Oliver Cromwell had died in September 1658, leaving his son Richard as Lord Protector of the Commonwealth. But whereas Oliver had always enjoyed the support of the army, Richard had no military experience. He resigned the protectorship in May 1659, creating a power vacuum. And that terrified the people. It was not so much a matter of *who* might step into that vacuum as *what*. No one could tell what sort of religious extremists might attempt to seize control.

Most of all, the Civil War of 1642–51 had not been forgotten; there was a real fear that England might again be plunged into lawlessness and violence. On 11 October 1659 the writer John Evelyn wrote in his diary: "The army now turned out parliament. We had now no government in the nation; all in confusion; no magistrate either owned or pretended but the soldiers, and they not agreed. God almighty have mercy on us and settle us!"

The return to England of Charles Stuart in May 1660 and his accession as Charles II meant the re-establishment of the monarchy and a different form of government. That itself was much more than a new face on the coins and a new head wearing the crown. It led to the restoration of the political power of the aristocracy and the revitalisation of many customs and practices that had been prohibited for over a decade. But the changes to life across the country were even more profound than in 1649, because the introduction of a puritan social agenda, from 1642 to Cromwell's death, had been a gradual process. Charles II oversaw its destruction almost overnight.

The radical changes of the Restoration could be seen even before Charles set foot back on English soil. The prince promised four things in the Declaration of Breda, signed shortly before his return. These were: to pardon all those who had committed crimes against him and his father during the Civil War and Cromwell's republic (except those who had signed Charles I's death warrant); to honour all sales and purchases of land in that time; to tolerate people of all religious faiths; and to give the army its back-pay, and recommission the troops in the service of the crown.

Following this declaration, parliament proclaimed Charles king on 8 May, and sent messengers to him inviting him to return. This act itself was exceptional: previously, no parliament could assemble unless it was summoned by the king. In 1660, as the 20th-century historian GM Trevelyan memorably observed, it was Parliament who summoned the king. The very use of a capital P in that sentence denotes the difference: Parliament had reinvented itself as more than just 'a parliament' – a meeting of representatives held at the king's behest. It had established its own legitimacy, which it then confirmed in an Act to which Charles II assented.



The Figure Explained:

Being a Diſſection of the Womb, with the uſual manner how the Child lies therein near the time of its Birth.

B B. The inner parts of the *Chorion* extended and branched out.

C. The *Amnios* extended.

D D. The Membrane of the Womb extended and branched.

E. The Fleſhy ſubſtance call'd the *Cake* or *Placenta*, which nouriſhes the Infant, it is full of Veſſels.

F. The Veſſels appointed for the Navel ſtring.

G. The Navel ſtring carrying nouriſhment from the *Placenta* to the Navel.

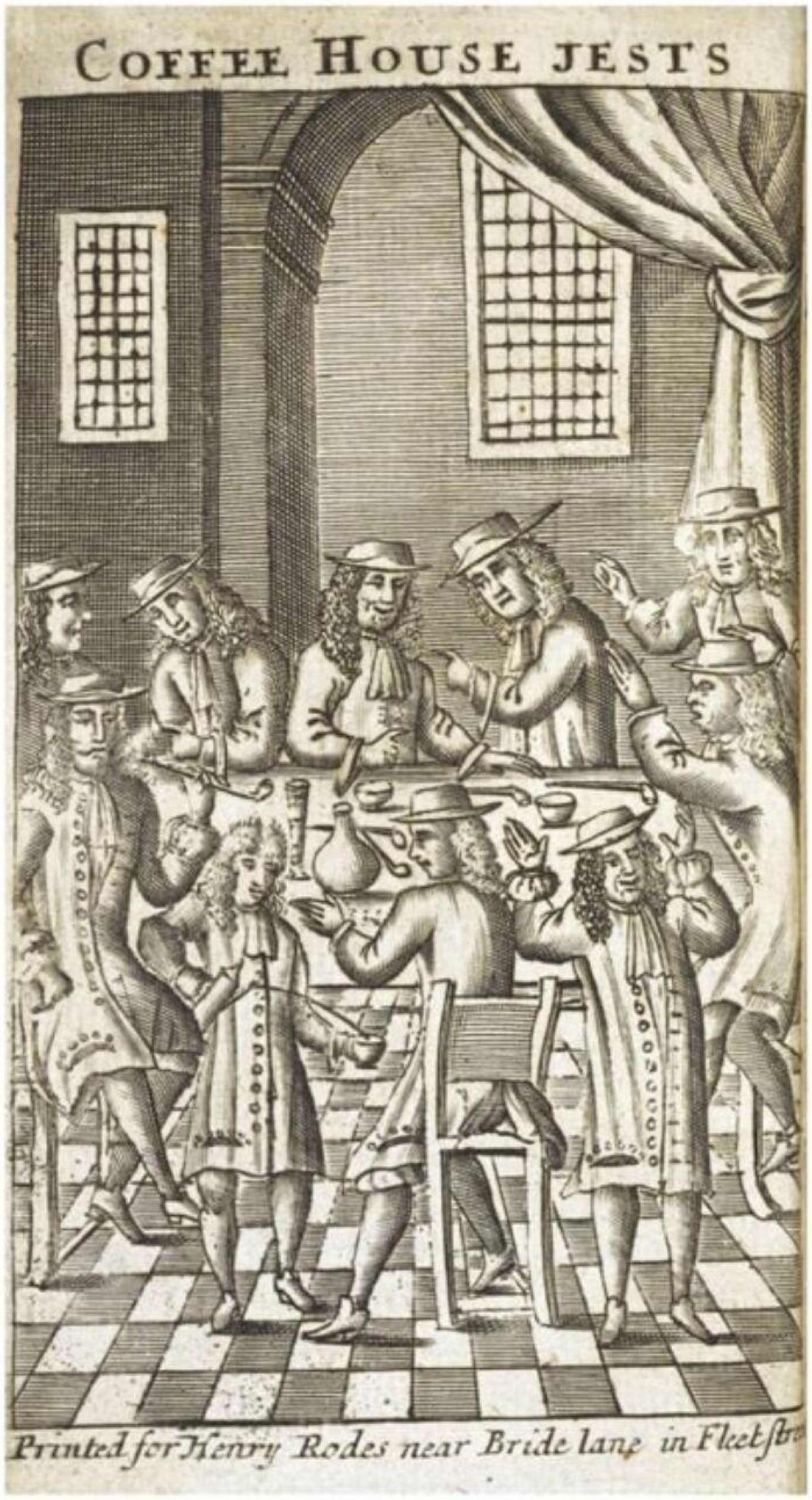
H H H. The manner how the Infant lieth in the Womb near the time of its Birth.

I. The Navel ſtring how it enters into the Navel.

A diagram of the womb in *The Midwives Book* (1671). From 1660, following a decade denied professional recognition, midwives could once more gain licences to practise

BRIDGEMAN

The news that, instead of being hanged, an adulterer would be punished with a spell of humiliation in a white sheet at the church door or in the marketplace was a relief to those who had affairs


COFFEE HOUSE JESTS
Printed for Henry Rodes near Bride lane in Fleet str

BRIDGEMAN

Men socialise in a coffee house, as depicted in a 17th-century illustration. With coffee, tea and chocolate now widely available, men of the chattering classes congregated in such establishments to conduct business and exchange political ideas

With immediate effect the House of Lords was reinstated. The structure of the Church of England that had existed prior to the Commonwealth (the period in which Cromwell had ruled England as a republic) was restored, and so were the ministers who had been ousted from their livings. Parliament also passed legislation confirming the king's promises. A new standing army was set up – 1660 is the date from which we date the oldest regiments in the British Army – and feudal tenure was finally abolished. Henceforth, manorial lords no longer held their land from the king but instead owned it freehold. Feudal rights due to the crown were extinguished in return for an annual payment of £100,000.

All of this was highly significant but it really was just the tip of the iceberg, for the Restoration had the most dramatic impact on ordinary people, too. The return of the episcopal hierarchy brought with it the re-establishment of church courts. Large numbers of physicians, surgeons, schoolmasters and midwives, who effectively had been unable to get official recognition of their professional status for more than a decade, flocked to present themselves and gain licences to practise. From 1660 you could now once more prove a will locally in an archdeaconry or a consistory court. People could once more also report their neighbours for moral offences such as bigamy, adultery and drunkenness and expect the wrongdoers to be summoned to the archdeaconry court. Latin, the language of the courts, which had been prohibited by Cromwell, made a comeback.

The puritan government of the Interregnum had taken a stern view of moral crime, dealing with wrongdoers not in the church courts but in the secular county courts and assizes. In 1650 the Commonwealth government had passed the Adultery Act, by which those found guilty could be sentenced to death. Although the act was so severe it was enforced only a few times, it hung over the heads of many.

More rigorously imposed were the laws against swearing (you could be fined for simply saying "as God is my witness"), the opening of alehouses, and breaking the Sabbath. Constables could search kitchens on Sundays to ensure that no unnecessary work was being done. No selling, buying or agricultural work was permitted, and even going for an afternoon stroll with your loved one on the Lord's Day could leave you liable to a fine. A maidservant found mending her dress on a Sunday was reported to the authorities and placed in the stocks in the rain as a punishment. Thus the repeal of all the legislation passed by the Commonwealth government was, to those who lived ordinary lives, like a huge lifting of social oppression.

The news that, instead of being hanged, an adulterer would again be punished with a spell of humiliation in a white sheet at the church door or in the marketplace was a blessed relief to those who

THE **HISTORY** ESSAY

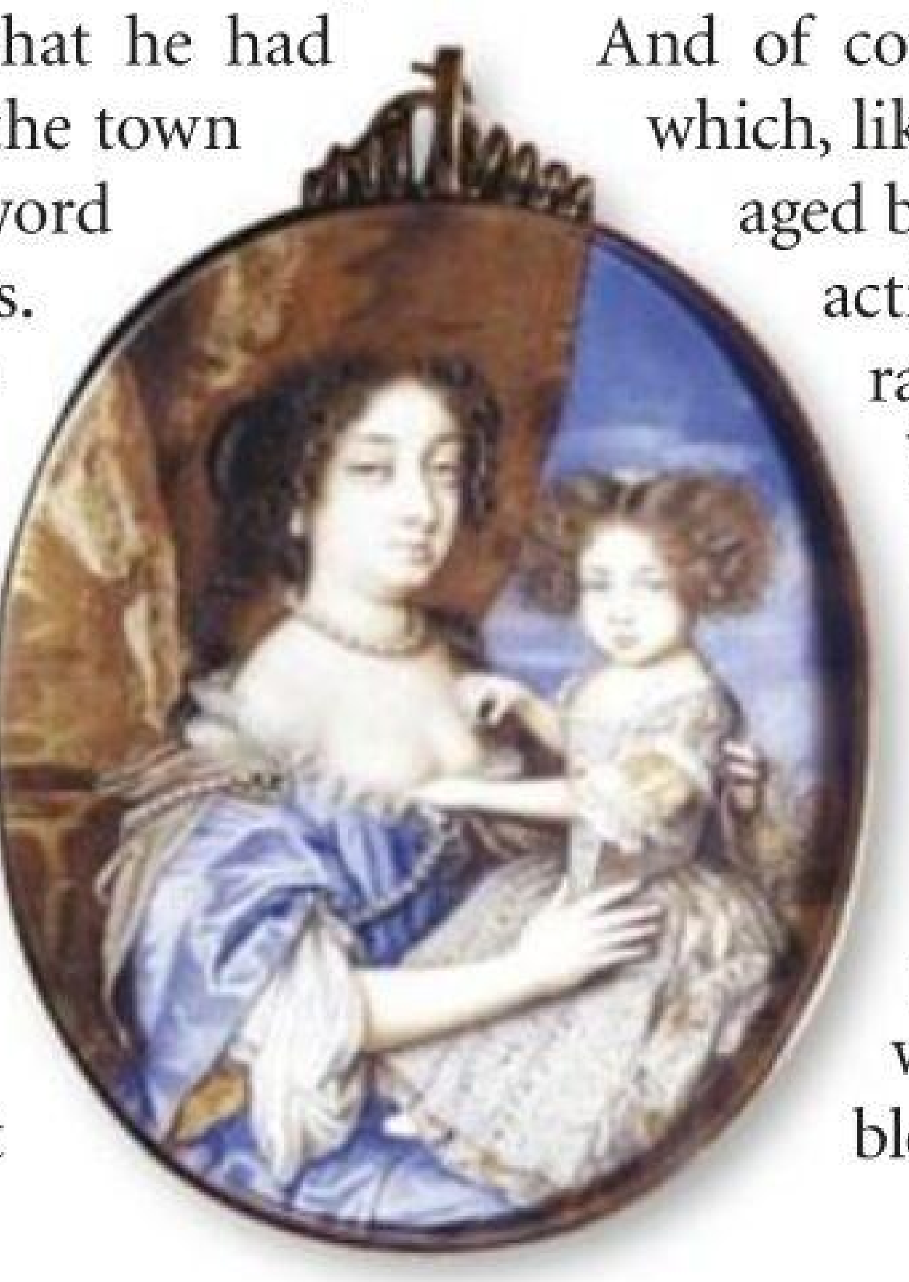
The rakes, like the king with his many mistresses, were kicking against the puritans in society. Their behaviour was calculated to shock and ridicule those who had cut off the head of Charles I

had illicit affairs. But it signals a more general change of attitude towards sex that followed the Restoration. When he landed in England, Charles already had an acknowledged illegitimate child by Lucy Walter, and anyone who knew him suspected that she wouldn't be the last of his mistresses. Indeed, even before Charles had left the Hague, he had bedded Barbara Villiers, wife of English courtier Roger Palmer. Barbara became his principal concubine for the next few years.

The contrast between the libidinous king and the previous government, which had until recently treated people such as him and his mistresses with the utmost severity, is astonishing. It was even more shocking at the time, given the openness of the king's affairs. Samuel Pepys, who had a series of illicit sexual liaisons himself, was taken aback at the brazen way in which the king would leave Barbara Villiers' apartments in the morning and walk back to his queen in the palace. Charles II created two of his mistresses duchesses, and made special provision for them to pass their titles to his illegitimate sons by them. Previously, illegitimacy had been a bar to the inheritance of a title. In all, Charles's illegitimate offspring included six dukes and one earl.

This brazenness marks another aspect of the watershed that was 1660 – namely, the rebelliousness of the rakes. There was no latitude for rakish behaviour in the 1650s. But after 1660, a plethora of young men were welcomed at court – men such as Lord Rochester, Lord Buckhurst and Sir Charles Sedley. Generally drunken and offensive libertines, they were scandalous and satirical in equal measure. To give an inkling of their antics, Pepys described a notorious episode in 1663 when Charles Sedley stripped and paraded naked on the balcony of a cook shop in London, reading from the scriptures and commenting on them blasphemously, and playing out "all the postures of lust and buggery that can be imagined". (At that time, buggery was a vice that was punishable by death.) In the course of his show, Sedley declared to the crowd of around 1,000 people that he had a powder such as would make all the 'women' of the town run after him – except that he did not use the word 'women' but referred to them by their sexual organs. Next, he took a glass of wine, washed his private parts in it and then drank it. After that he drank the king's health using the same glass.

Sedley got into trouble – as did all the rakes – but that is not the point. Society under Charles did not punish the rakes severely; it tolerated them. The reason was that the rakes, like the king himself with his many mistresses, were kicking against the puritans in society. Their behaviour was calculated to shock and ridicule those who had cut off the head of Charles I – and who, in doing so, had plunged the nation into a crisis.



Charles II made little attempt to hide his affair with his mistress Barbara Villiers, shown here with her child

TOPFOTO

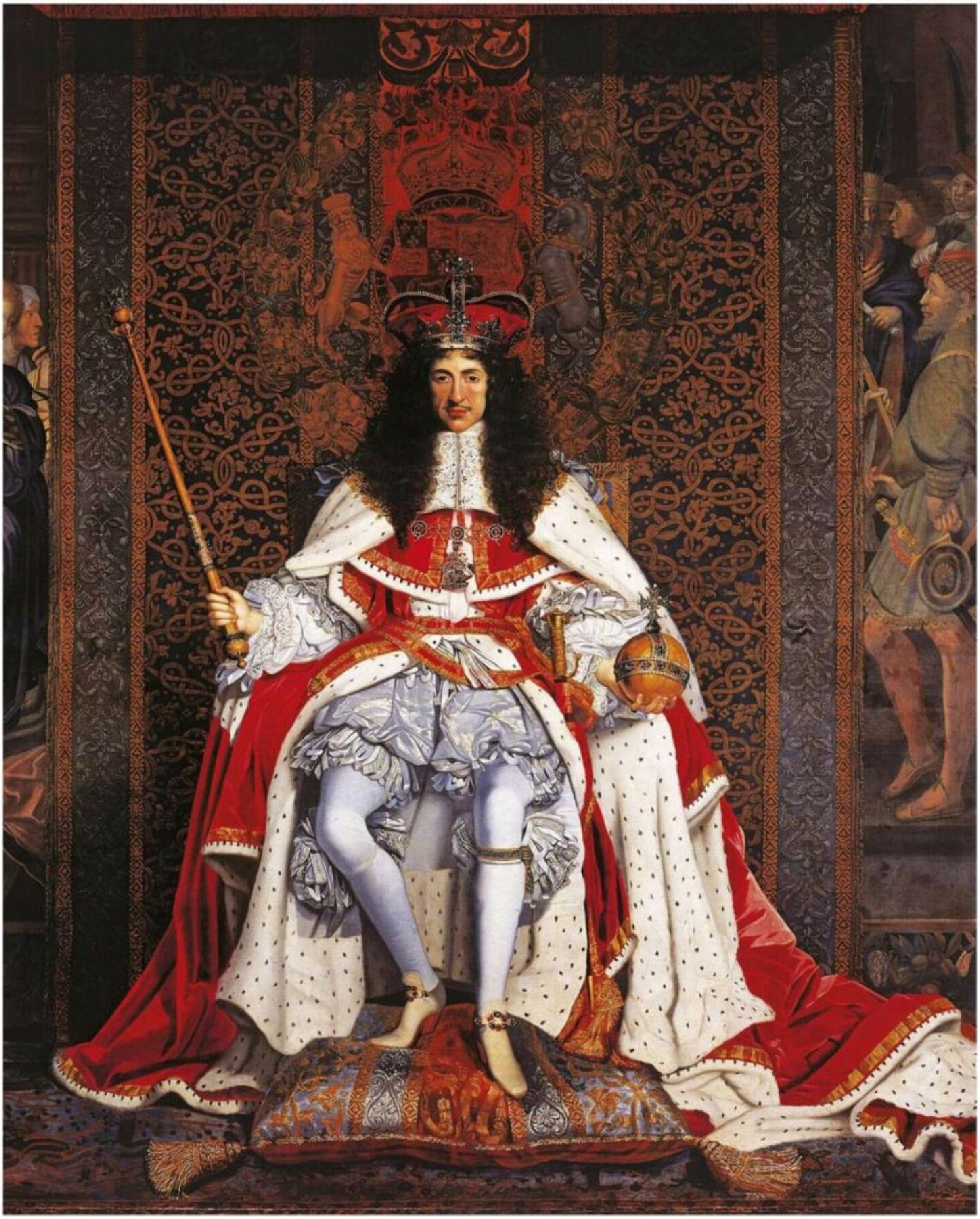
The more subtle, all-pervading changes brought on by the return of the king went even further. The restoration of aristocratic power, coupled with the decline of restrictive moral codes of conduct, led to something of an aristocratic renaissance. Hierarchy became fashionable again: people started to flaunt their wealth more openly. Whereas in the 1650s the interests of the Commonwealth had prevailed in public, from 1660 conspicuous consumption was allowed to let rip. Foreign fashions were imported, adopted and cast aside within a year or so. The volumes of textiles imported from the Orient, such as chintzes from India, increased. New commodities such as tea, coffee and chocolate were likewise shipped to England in much greater quantities as the urban and middle classes once more took to aping the fashionable practices of the gentry and aristocracy.

Under the Commonwealth, gambling was forbidden, so it had to take place covertly. Under Charles II, it was conducted not only in public but on a massive scale. By 1664, the problems of heirs betting colossal fortunes had forced the government to introduce the Gaming Act, making gambling debts of more than £100 unenforceable. Nevertheless, people continued to wager sums without caution. In 1674 Charles Cotton, author of *The Compleat Gamester*, noted that several estates of more than £2,000 per year had recently been lost at cards and tables (the backgammon board, on which several games were played besides backgammon).

Nor were these the only ways by which people threw away their wealth: bowling greens, cricket pitches, golf courses, pall-mall courts and tennis courts were all places where huge sums were won and lost. In 1667, one wrestling match in St James's Park, between the men of the West Country and those of the North, was held for a purse of £1,000 in addition to all the bets placed on the outcome. You could not have seen such a spectacle under Cromwell's rule.

And of course gambling underpinned the 'sport of kings', which, like many other sports, had been banned or discouraged by the puritans. One of the new king's first sporting activities after his accession was to reopen Newmarket racecourse, left in ruins by Cromwell. Very quickly it became one of the country's great magnets for horse-racing enthusiasts. Such was the passion for gambling that gentlemen even started to place bets on their footmen, so that races between runners were held for the first time in England.

If 1660 saw a sea change in the recreational pursuits of the wealthy, the same was true for those who were more interested in popular games and blood sports. Bear baiting had been outlawed by the

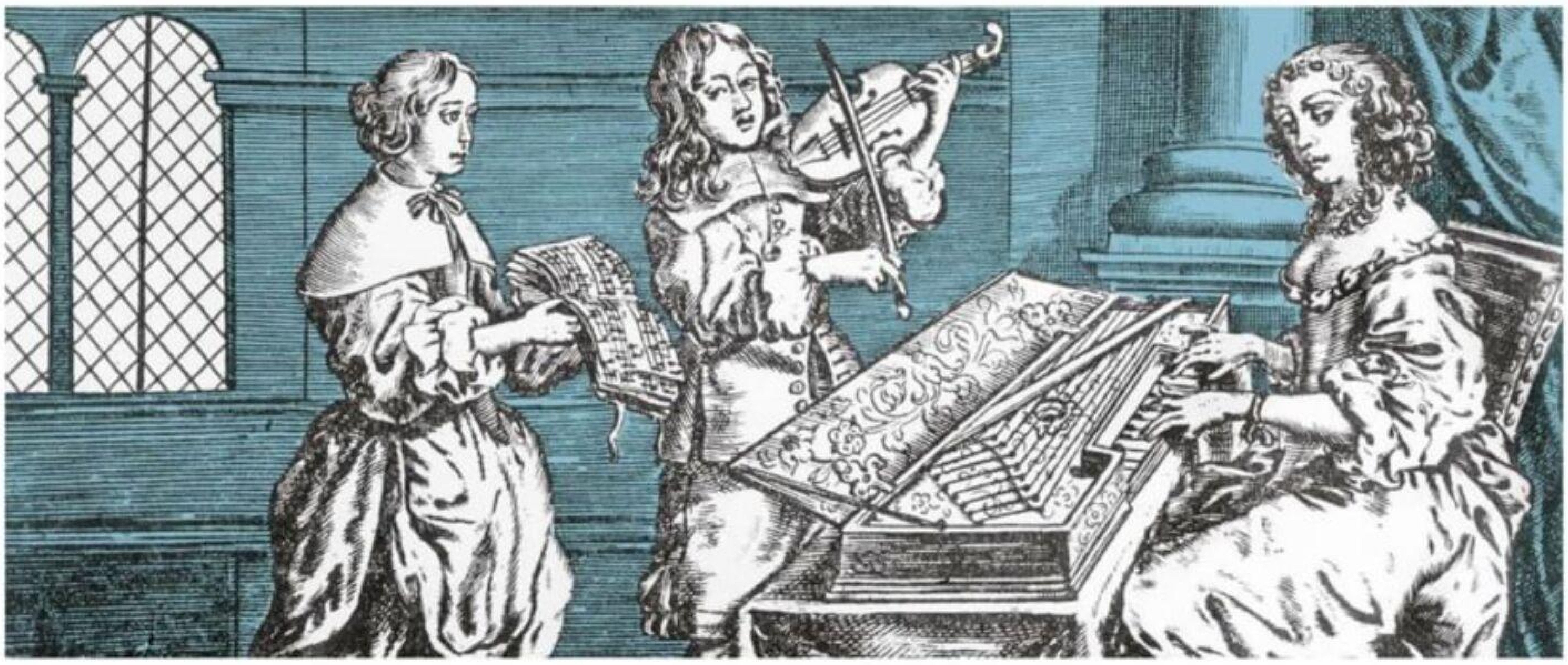


BRIDGEMAN

Charles II holding the new orb and sceptre crafted for his coronation by goldsmith Sir Robert Vyner. The king took every opportunity to flaunt his power and wealth, and many Restoration aristocrats were more than happy to follow suit

THE **HISTORY** ESSAY

The king and his brother, the Duke of York, acted as patrons of drama and gave their names to the new London theatre companies. In doing so, they helped usher in the second great age of English dramatic writing



A singer, violinist and clavichordist perform in a c17th-century engraving. In the wake of Charles II's restoration, musicians returned to the royal court and ordinary people sang songs that had been banned under Oliver Cromwell

Commonwealth – not on the grounds of cruelty to the animals but on account of the sins in which it allowed spectators to indulge: drinking, betting and swearing. Cromwell's soldiers shot all the bears in London; fighting cocks had their necks wrung. The Restoration brought the return of these popular amusements – and such traditions as playing football on a Sunday and dancing around the maypole. Most extraordinarily, Cromwell had forbidden people from celebrating Christmas, believing it to be a mere superstition. As a result, on Christmas Day shops were not allowed to close and preaching by church ministers was proscribed. People were discouraged from eating mince pies, plum porridge or brawn in December, decorating their houses with boughs of holly and ivy, singing carols or passing around the wassail bowl, or giving children and servants treats in boxes (hence 'Boxing Day'). Critics who thought this was going too far wrote tracts protesting the innocence of 'Old Father Christmas', who thus made his first appearance in English culture as a protest figure against puritanism. All of this prohibition ended with the king's return.

As with sports, gambling, games and seasonal festivities, so it was with music and the theatre. Although Cromwell didn't ban music, it was removed from churches. The consequent disbandment of the cathedral choirs and the chapel royal, and the laying-off of the court musicians, were significant setbacks for the profession. Even popular music suffered: magistrates took action against the playing of lewd songs in public houses. The return of the king breathed new life into the art of music-making virtually overnight, as the court required a chapel royal staff and court musicians, and ordinary people went back to their old favourite songs and composed more of them without fear of reprimand.

As for the theatres, these had all been closed in 1642. The Globe was demolished and tenements built on the site. The return of the king and his brother, the Duke of York, who both acted as patrons of drama and gave their names to the new London theatre companies, was a hugely significant change. It ushered in England's second great age of dramatic writing.

The Restoration shows that dynasties and dates can have enormous significance. The year 1660 is something of a continental shelf in its changes, in that the new regime had a profound effect on everyone socially, in their everyday lives, as well as politically. With this in mind, and given the fact that we still have the same monarchy that was restored in that year, 1660 perhaps should be thought of alongside 1066 as a date everyone should know. It is a fascinating point in our history – and one of the few moments about which we can say without fear of contradiction that the history of the monarchy and that of the ordinary man and woman are bound together and inseparable. H

Ian Mortimer is a historian and novelist, and the author of three *Time Traveller's Guides* including two to medieval and Elizabethan England

DISCOVER MORE

BOOK

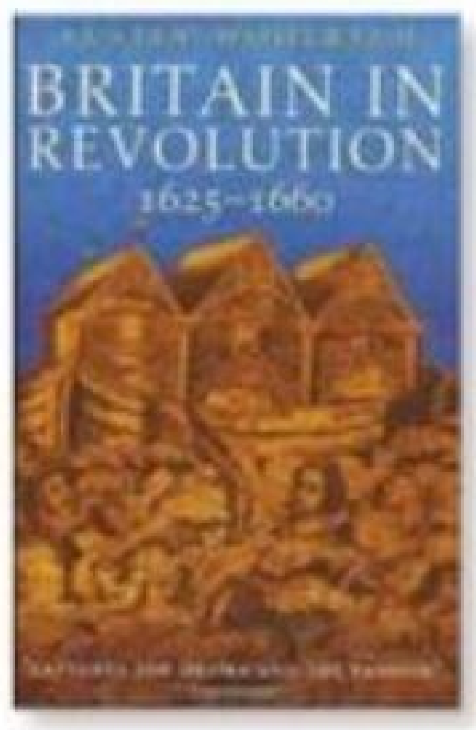
▶ **The Time Traveller's Guide to Restoration Britain**
by Ian Mortimer (Bodley Head, 2017)

AKG-IMAGES

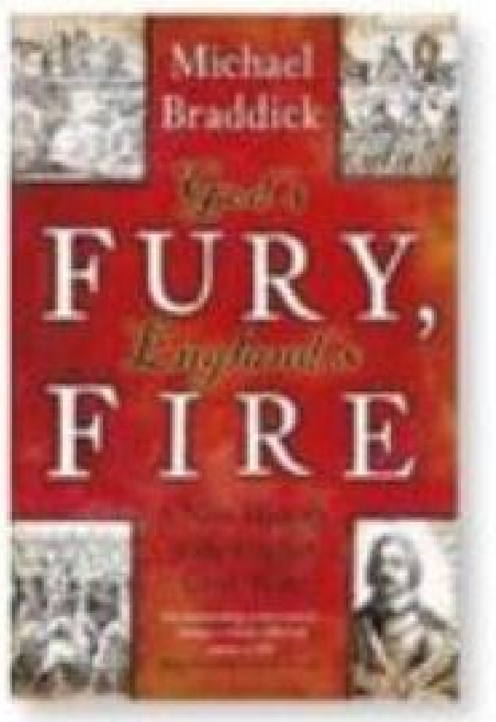
The Civil War in words

JOHN MORRILL *introduces his choice of the best books about the conflict*

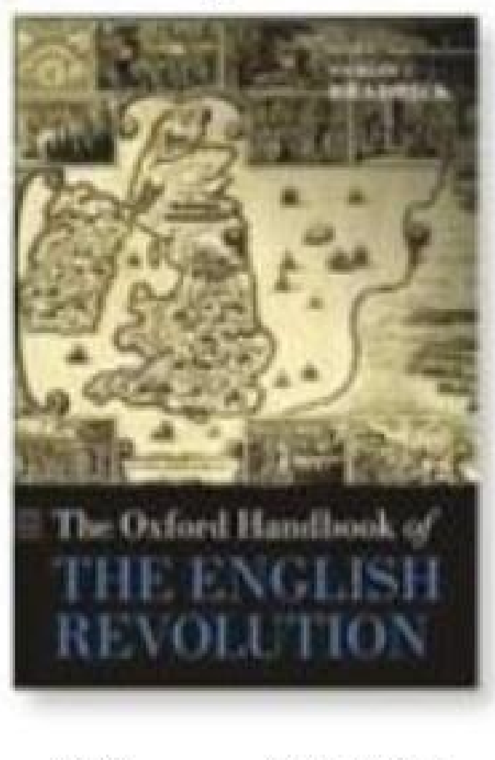
The most readable and magisterial narrative survey of the tumultuous period of civil war, covering the military, political, religious and social histories with equal aplomb, is **Britain in Revolution 1625–1660** by **Austin Woolrych** (Oxford University Press, 2002). It weighs in at 842 pages, and even the paperback is pricey – but it's worth every ounce and penny. It is gently Whiggish, with a softer spot for the parliamentarians than for the royalists (and little time for more anarchic forces released by the late 1640s), but overall it is reliable and enjoyable to read, beautifully pitched at the general reader.

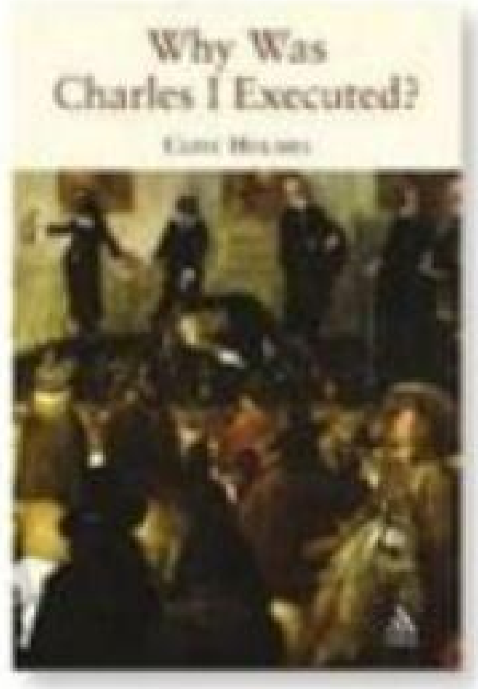


A more affordable tract for the times is **God's Fury, England's Fire: A New History of the English Civil Wars** by **Michael Braddick** (Allen Lane, 2008), which is much stronger on the breadth of popular agency and engagement than Woolrych's timeless account. At more than 750 pages long this, too, is not for the faint-hearted, but it is the book that most effectively links together the 'new social history', the massive and often recondite literature on print culture, and the sheer scale of the force of ideas before and resulting from the implosion of the regime of Charles I.



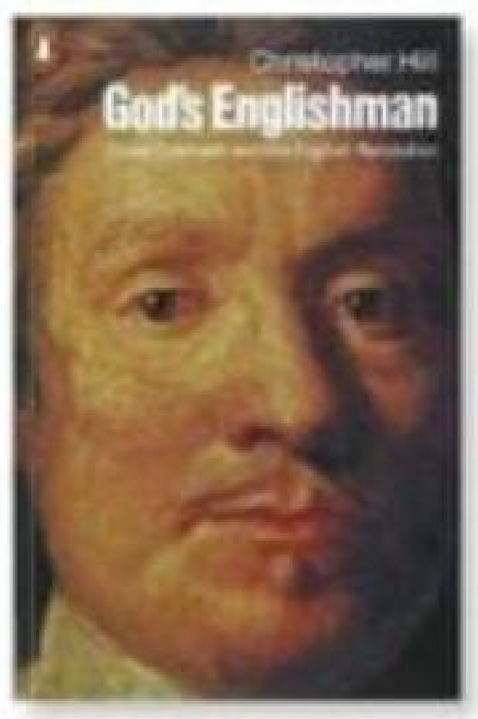
Mike Braddick also edited the **Oxford Handbook of the English Revolution** (Oxford University Press, 2015), a remarkable collection of 33 state-of-the-art essays on every aspect of the mid-17th-century conflict and revolutions across the British Isles. Almost all of the leading scholars currently working in the field are featured, and the breadth of coverage is evident in the titles of the four main sections: 'Events'; 'Institutions and Actors'; 'Parties, Ideas and People'; and 'Wider Perspectives'. An especially important aspect is that ten of the chapters place the Civil War and English Revolution in a British and Irish perspective – a vital part of the current rethinking of the nature of the crisis. Again, it's expensive but is also as close to being indispensable as any book on the topic can be.

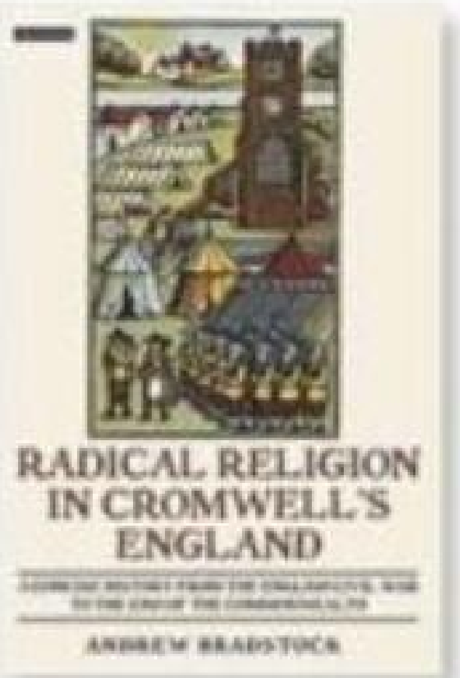




One scholar who always asks the big questions – and provides provocative answers to those questions – is **Clive Holmes**. The title of his tome **Why was Charles I Executed?** (Continuum, 2006) is deceptive. This book asks not just one but eight key questions, beginning with: why did Charles I call the Long Parliament? He then asks how the king gained support in parliament, why parliament won, why the king was executed, and even why there was an English revolution at all.

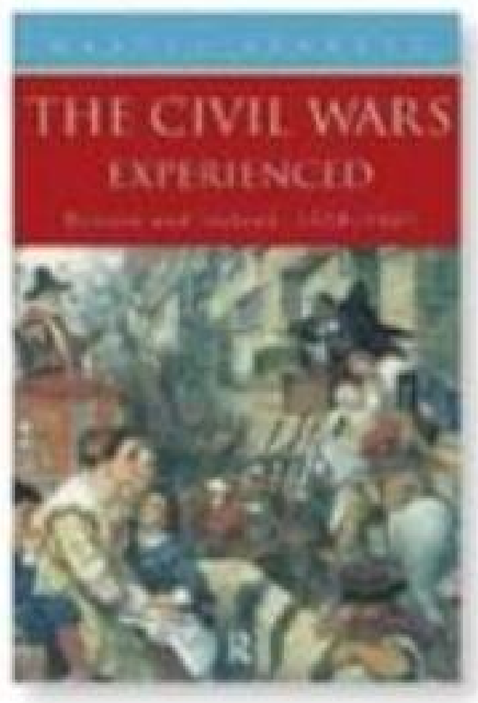
The figure who came to dominate the military and political history of the period is, of course, Oliver Cromwell, about whom more than 50 biographies are currently in print. Almost all of them portray him as a military genius and passionate advocate of religious liberty (except for Catholics), all too willing to use force and political authoritarianism in the service of 'English liberty'. One biography that assumes some knowledge of Cromwell's career (easily gained from the books listed here), and with a distinctive take on him as a man who made and then betrayed the revolution, is **God's Englishman** by **Christopher Hill** (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1970) – a fine work by a great but now largely out-of-favour historian.



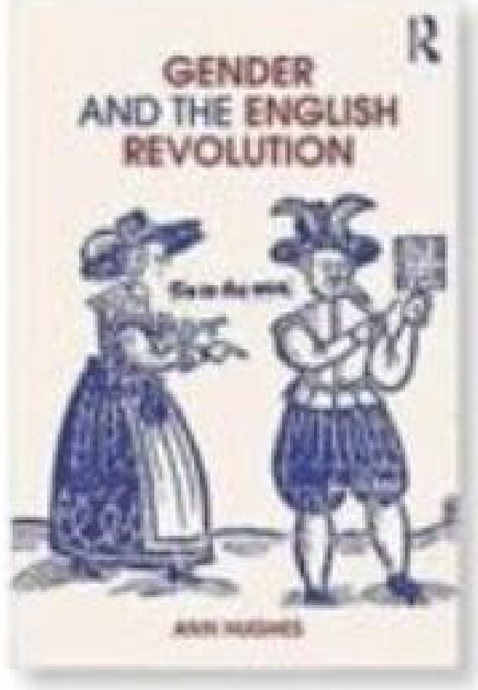


Religion has to be at the heart of any study of the Civil War, and a book that looks with enthusiasm and empathy at 'teeming liberty' and the ferment of ideas is **Radical Religion in Cromwell's England: A Concise History from the English Civil War to the end of the Commonwealth** by **Andrew Bradstock** (IB Tauris, 2010).

To get a sense of what it was like to live through the Civil War, with its violence, dislocations, displacements and disorders, read **The Civil Wars Experienced: Britain and Ireland, 1638–1661** by **Martyn Bennett** (Routledge, 1999), who draws on and synthesises ideas from a close reading of personal sources such as diaries, petitions and correspondence. It is a powerfully evocative book, reminding readers that the real losers in all civil wars are ordinary men and women.



Indeed, women had their own stories of disempowerment and new opportunities during the conflict, and some of these are brilliantly captured by **Ann Hughes** in the shortest – but by no means slightest – of the books in this list: **Gender and the English Revolution** (Routledge, 2011). Though some (perhaps many) women were empowered, Hughes also shows how male political identities were fractured by the war, and how rival understandings of sexuality, manliness, effeminacy and womanliness were deployed in political debate. Historians are still confused about whether the Civil War had great causes. Few doubt that it had great consequences.



John Morrill is a life fellow of Selwyn College, Cambridge and a prolific author of books and articles on the early modern period. His five-volume edition of all of the recorded words of Oliver Cromwell will be published by Oxford University Press in 2018/19

Diane Purkiss on... **why the Civil War matters today**

“Men came to understand that absolute power was only as good as the worst idea to flit through the head of the monarch”

Once upon a time in history, in the autumn of 1647, the leaders of a military coup agreed to listen for an entire fortnight to the grievances of ordinary men. Oliver Cromwell and Henry Ireton could simply have ignored the dissent within the ranks of the New Model Army they had led to victory after victory over the forces of the monarch. Instead, they decided to pay attention. There was little chance that they were going to agree. But they didn’t round up the dissenters and shoot them all, either.

Cromwell and Ireton were accustomed to being the radicals in the room – the far left of the parliamentarians who had challenged the autarchic rule of Charles I and sought to put him on trial for treason, in defiance of church and established state. Abruptly, they were shown that there was a lot of room to their left. At St Mary’s Church, Putney, in October they heard Colonel Thomas Rainborowe say arguably the most important sentence in English history:

> *“I think that the poorest he that is in England hath a life to live, as the greatest he; and therefore truly, Sir, I think it’s clear, that every man that is to live under a government ought first by his own consent to put himself under that government; and I do think that the poorest man in England is not at all bound in a strict sense to that government that he hath not had a voice to put himself under.”*

With these words, modern democracy was born.

The Greeks might have invented democracy, but theirs was a democracy for the better-off. So was English parliamentary democracy before and also after the Civil War. The franchise test was land ownership or wealth, and women were automatically excluded from voting. Elections were by public show of hands, and the man being confirmed was often the landlord of some of the voters. Yes, man – there was usually only one candidate. But this creaky old mess was the only bulwark against the whims of the monarch.

The war was fought against some of Charles I’s worst ideas. Gradually, men came to understand the principle that absolute power was only as good as the worst idea to flit through the head of the monarch.

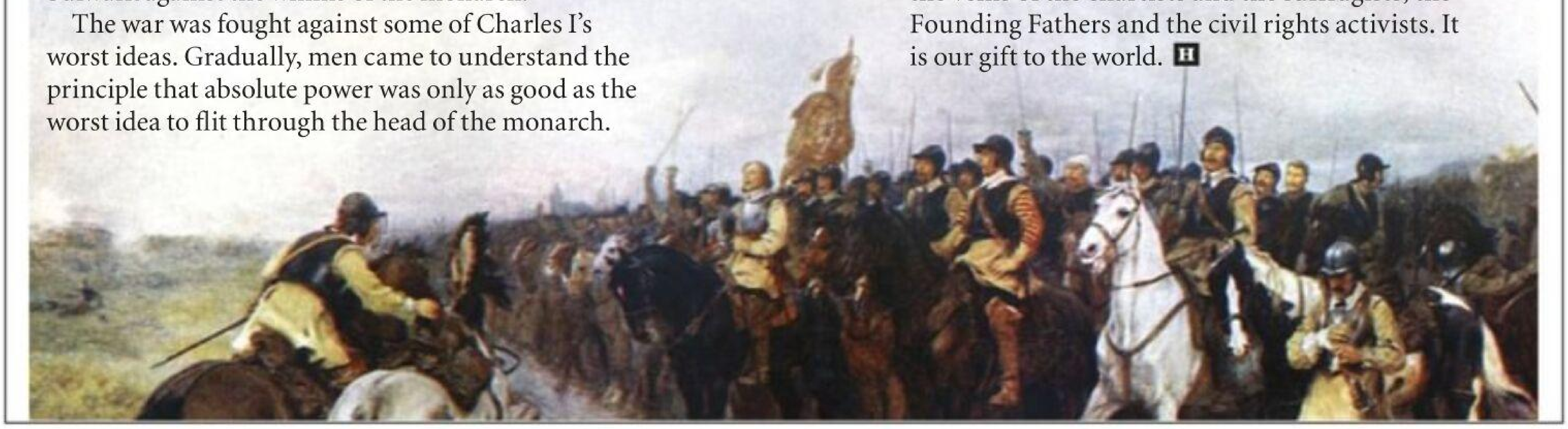
Diane Purkiss is professor of English literature at Keble College, Oxford, and author of *The English Civil War: A People’s History* (HarperCollins, 2006)

What, they asked themselves, should the state be? They decided that it ought to be much more like a gathered church. Many of the soldiers in the New Model Army were members of churches that rejected the idea of vicars and priests, let alone bishops. Instead, they proposed that the Holy Spirit blew where it willed, that all men were equal before God. The Holy Spirit might choose one believer as a mouthpiece for God, but that status was not permanent, and could not be obtained at Oxford or Cambridge.

The New Model Army thought that the state should be more like an army company. When parliament recruited the New Model Army, it was laughed to scorn by its royalist opponents because of its idea of promotion on merit in the field. How, royalists wondered, was it possible for an army to be disciplined if it was not led by landowners? The answer turned out to be a systematic campaign to make the army think of itself collectively as the army of God, provided with prayer books containing warlike Psalms so that soldiers around the campfire could all sing together.

United voices promoted larger ideals of unity. We stand together, or we go down separately. We find ways to work together, and to listen to one another, or we have nothing but the war of all against all, in which the strong crush the weak. They all knew that if they lost the war they could all be executed as traitors – and events after the Restoration proved them right, as Charles II even dug up the decaying corpses of Cromwell and Ireton to hang them at Tyburn. But this condign punishment could only drive underground the idea that all men have a life to live, that all men have a stake in government; not even the mightiest monarch could make it go away.

It required the entire experience of the Civil War for that one sentence to be spoken. Seeing droves of other men die for the right to a stake in government guaranteed its continuance. The words throbbed in the veins of the chartists and the suffragists, the Founding Fathers and the civil rights activists. It is our gift to the world. H



Oliver Cromwell leads a parliamentarian army in battle against royalist forces, as depicted in a 20th-century painting

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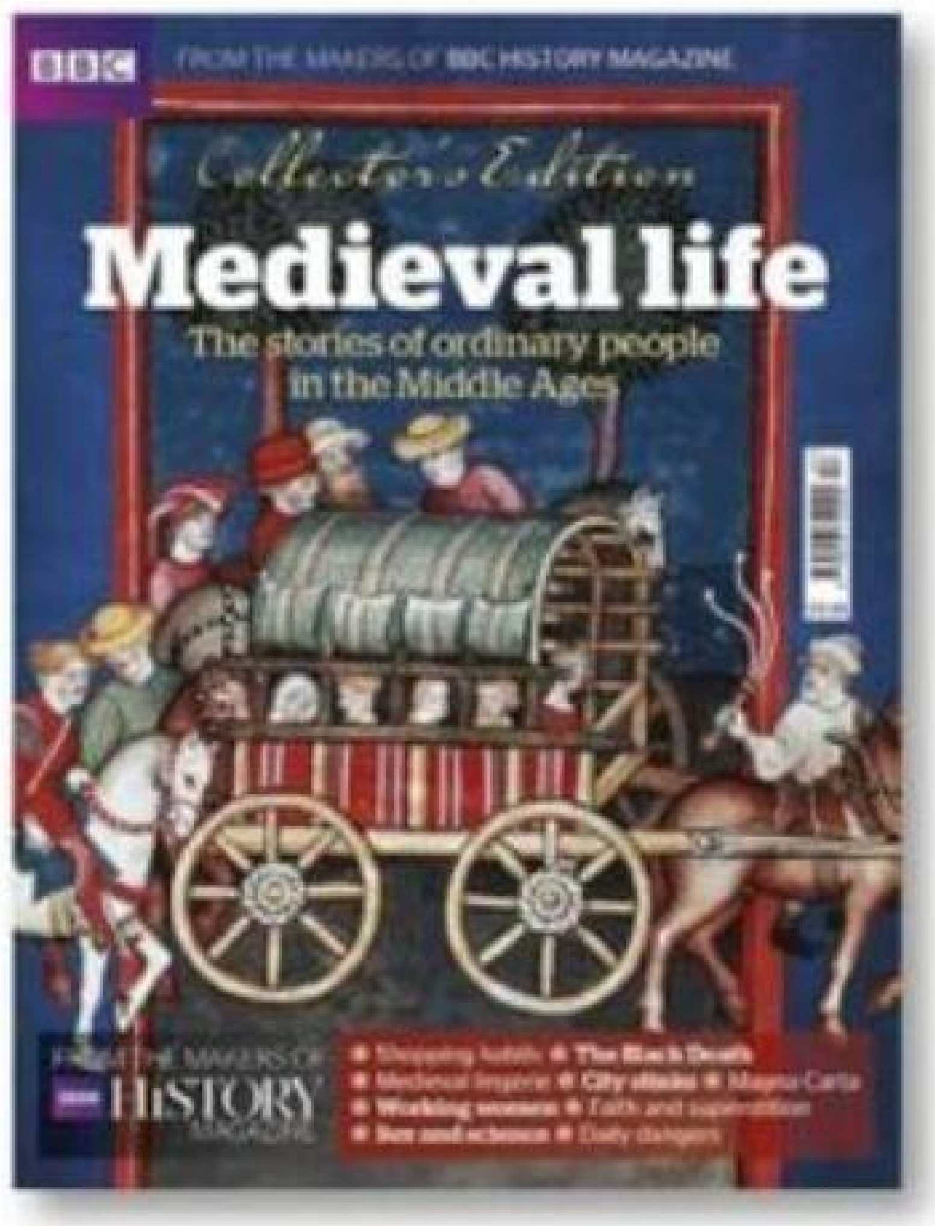

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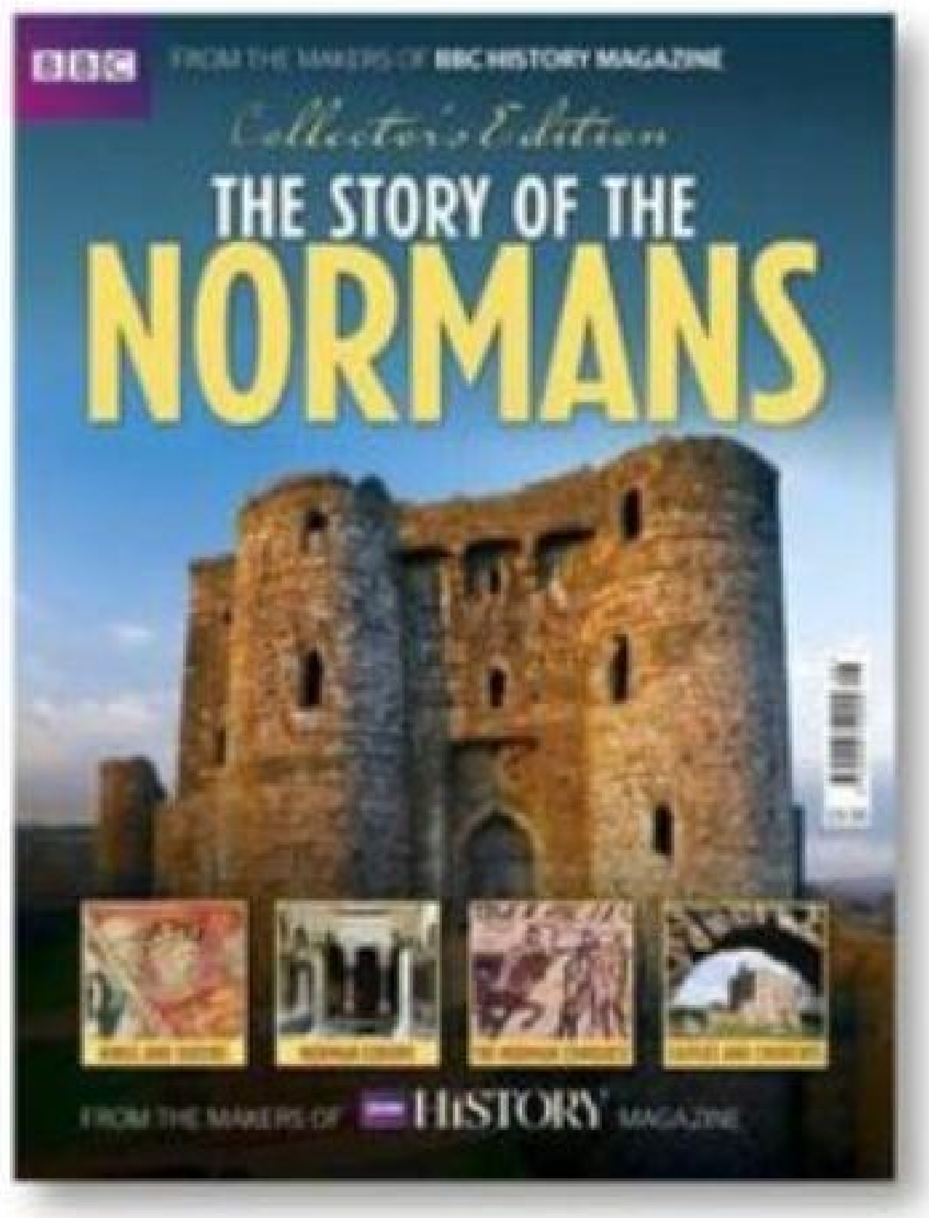

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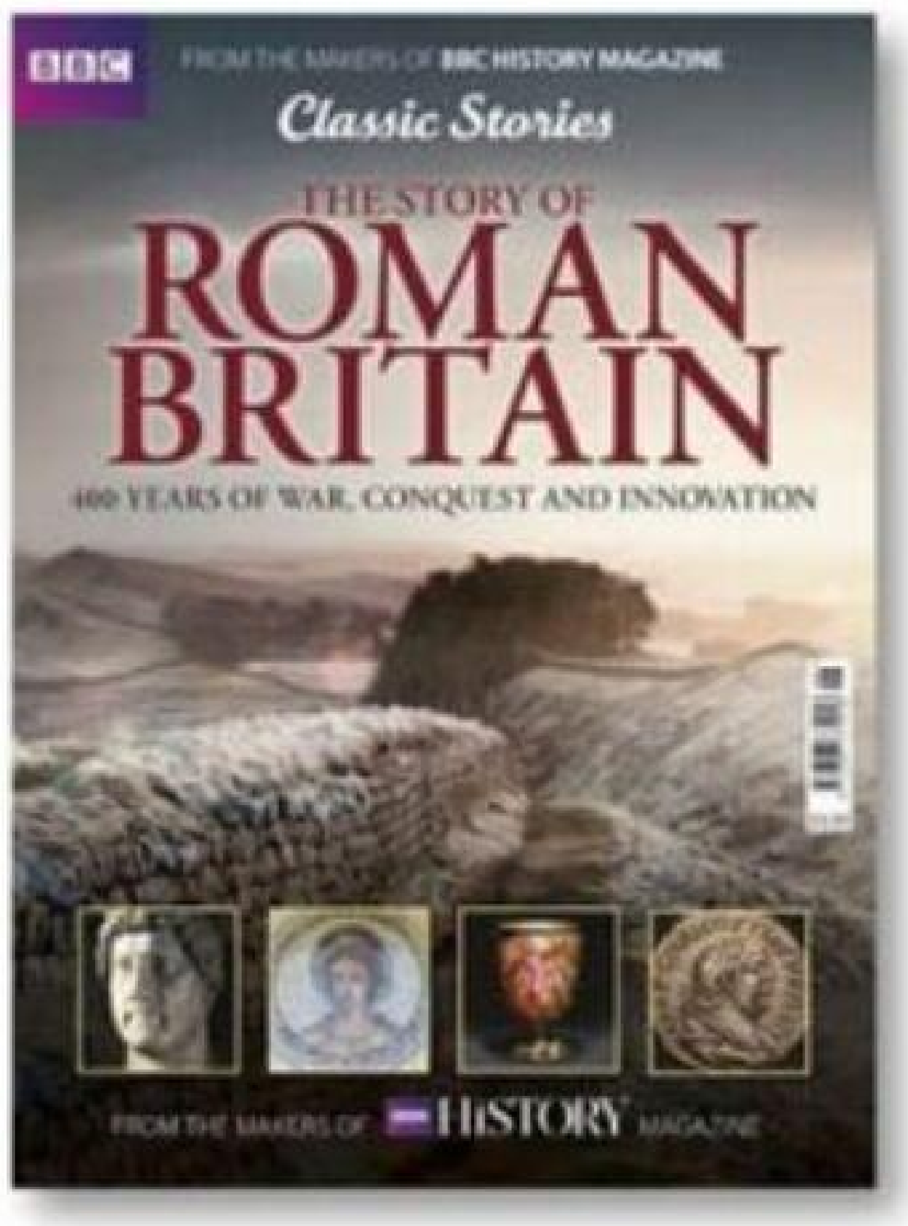

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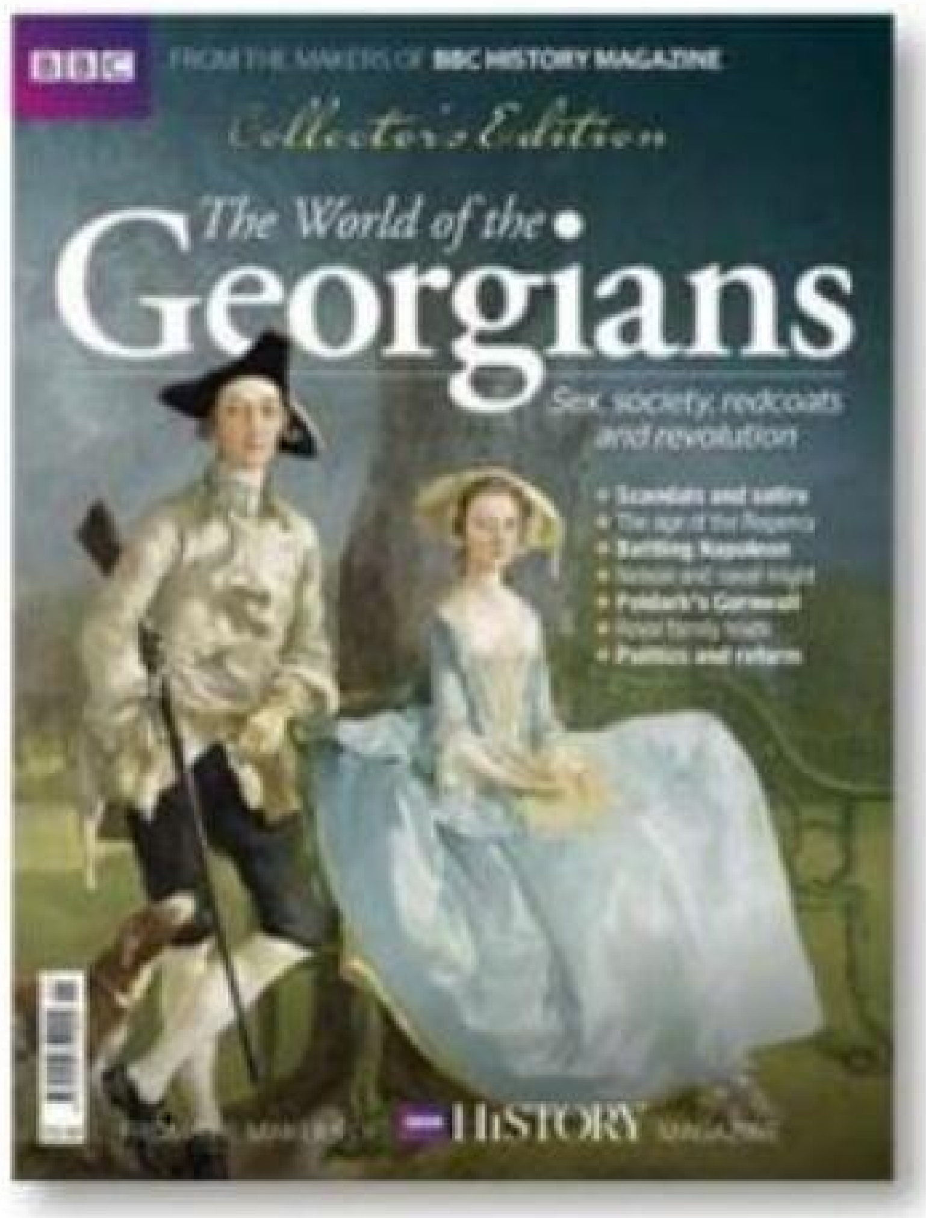

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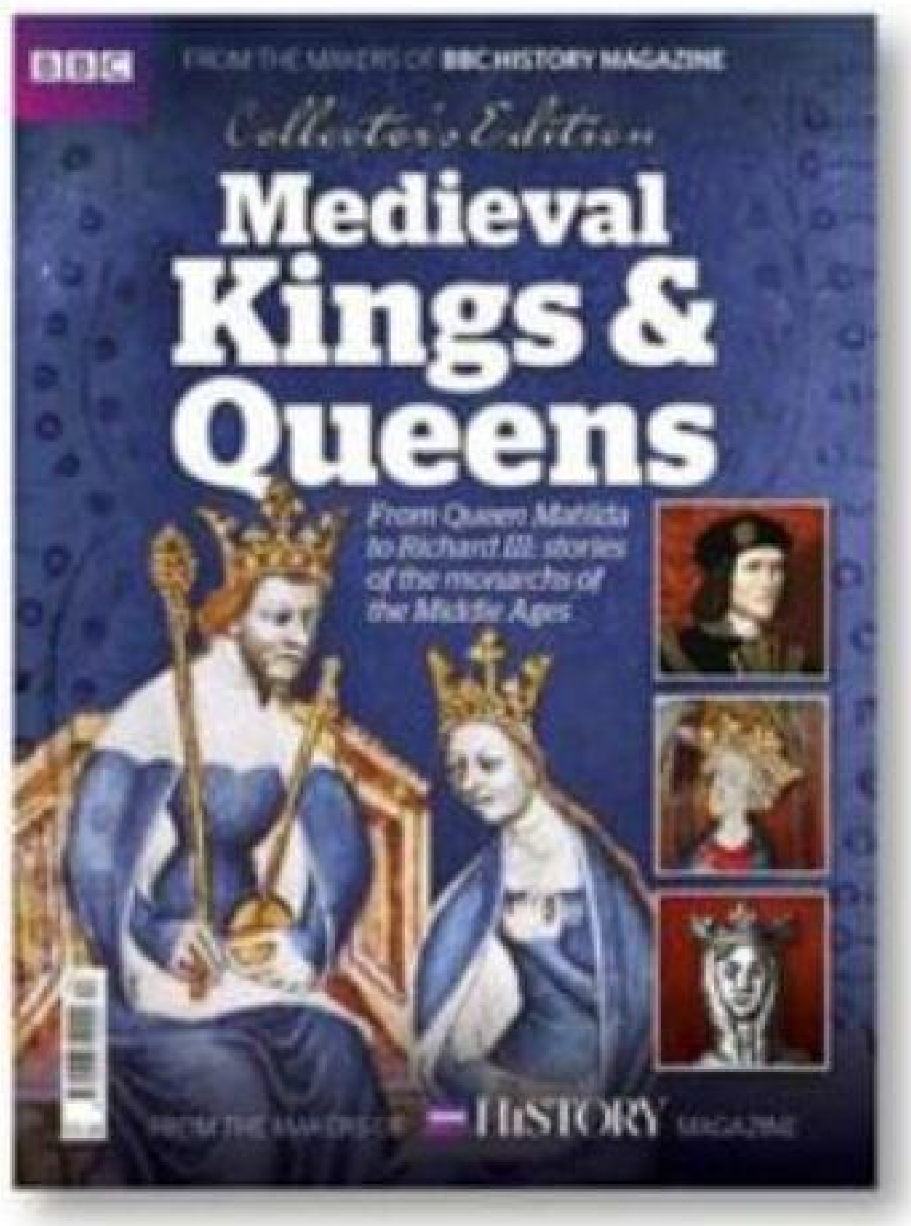

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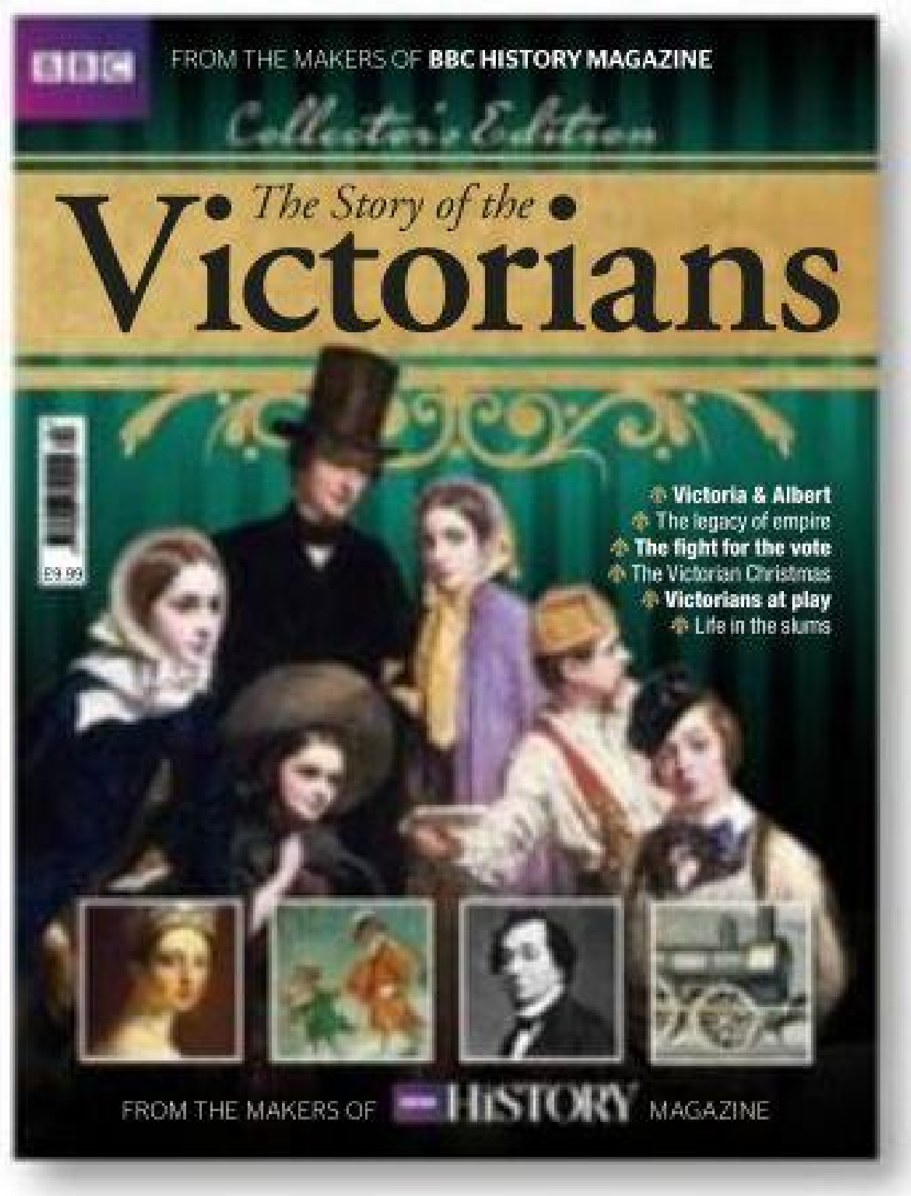

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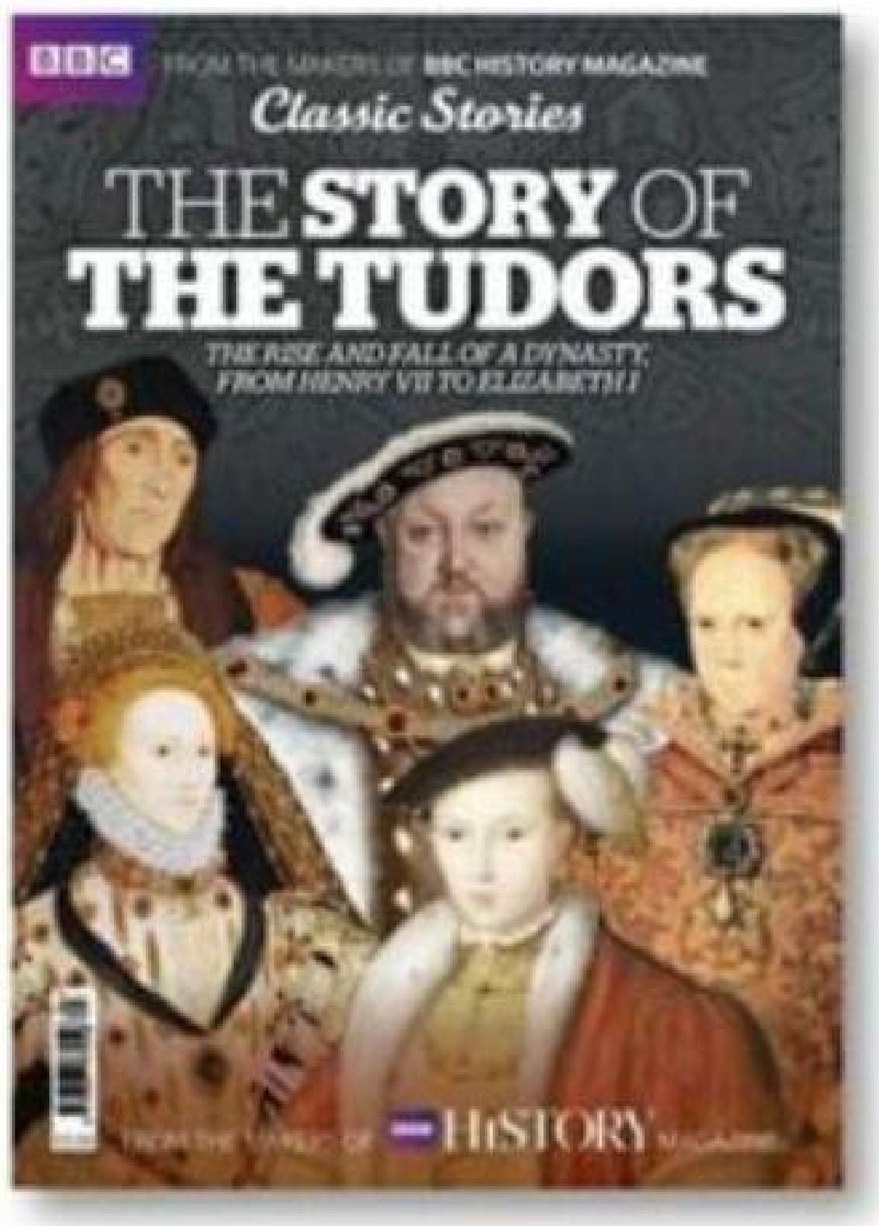

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